

- 3 Boris Groys Post-Global Desire
- 7 Jože Barši The Gap between Departing and Arriving Demons/Suppositions
- 7 Marko Batista The Techno-Sublime in DIY Electronics
- 9 Boris Beja Vrtača
- 10 Goran Bertok On the Cosmos and Other Things
- 10 *The Body of Confucius* Curators Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming, with Jeffrey Shaw
- 11 BridA/Tom Kerševan, Sendi Mango, Jurij Pavlica Tracked Houston
- 12 Keti Chukhrov
- 13 Jasmina Cibic The Pavilion
- 15 Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica Neur-O-Matic
- 15 Femkanje Radio Mapping the Independent Scene
- 17 Vadim Fishkin Choose Your Day
- 17 Maja Hodošček If You Remember, I Always Talked about the Future
- 19 Ištvan Išt Huzjan A Reaction in a Reactor
- 21 IRWIN The Corpse of Art
- 22 Sergej Kapus Futur Antérieur
- 24 Staš Kleindienst Does the Cosmos Have a Center?
- 25 Nina Koželj Flow Job
- 25 Tanja Lažetić The Skies above Me
- 26 Gregor Mobius DNA—A Proto-Observer
- 27 Marko and Marika Pogačnik Transforming Chaos into Cosmos and Vice Versa
- 28 Uroš Potočnik Nothing Is What It Seems... We Are in the Draft of the Century
- 29 Marjetica Potrč Survival Strategies and Community Building in Post-Capitalism
- 31 Lina Rica & Boštjan Čadež Tekstomlat
- 31 Sašo Sedlaček Sky in Ruins (di sotto in sù)
- 32 Ali Van Body Temperature
- 32 Anton Vidokle Factories of Resurrection: Interview with Anton Vidokle
- 37 *Yaji Garden* Art Under the Sky Curators Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming
- 44 Arseny Zhilyaev Second Advents: On the Issue of Planning in Contemporary Art
- 50 Dunja Zupančič::Miha Turšič::Dragan Živadinov Actuator::MG

Boris Groys Post-Global Desire

When I was asked to curate the 2016 Triennial of Contemporary Art, I immediately thought of Cosmos—the space beyond the globe—as the most appropriate topic for our time and for the Slovenian artistic and cultural context.

Our time is most often understood as the time of globalisation. And under globalisation we tend to understand global networks of “immaterial” data circulation and financial flows as directly or indirectly involving all countries and individuals of the world. Under globalisation it seems that all of us have become parts of an expanded but simultaneously closed global system. This system is closed because each piece of data is traceable and retrievable: computers do not forget. Even if data were to be completely lost, it can never stray—it can never break out of networks of circulation and go its own way.

Let us compare the Internet with earlier means of communication such as traditional mail. A letter can be sent in a bottle thrown to the sea, or it can be transported by a trained pigeon. A bottle can be carried away by a storm to be found centuries later in a different place. A pigeon can change the direction of its flight, and again the letter can be found much later. An email can never change its direction. In the closed system of the Internet, a message can never stray from its prescribed trajectory and still survive because it cannot exist beyond the electric cables and signals that codify it.

The Internet is a system of cables, and these cables are mostly placed in the depth of the Earth. Using the terminology introduced by Carl Schmitt, one can say that the traditional letter was subjected to the *nomos* of the sea, and the email to the *nomos* of the Earth.¹ For the traditional letter the route between sender and receiver was never clearly defined. Rather, it was accidental and dependent on the personal decisions of responsible individuals. If these individuals made wrong decisions, the letter would travel in unexpected directions. While the Internet does not allow such a possibility, its inscription into the Earth causes the Internet to be subjected to the fate of the planet in a much more radical way than any other means of communication in history.

Thus, relying on the Internet as its leading medium, the contemporary phase of globalization seems more vulnerable and fragile than its earlier phases. Wars and catastrophes destroyed many civilizations of the past, yet many artworks, texts and documents survived—precisely because they were kept in unusual places or otherwise accidentally escaped destruction. Archeological excavations show the Earth itself to be a huge museum. However, if the Internet as a whole were to crash, it is unlikely that individual messages could be salvaged. Even if some data were to remain, it would be difficult to determine what reality it refers to. Only the hardware of the Internet would be discovered, admired and aestheticized by the future generations unearthing it. Just as we admire the Roman aqueducts—even when there is no water running through them.

A couple of decades ago, the fascination over the immaterial, virtual and global was ubiquitous. Today a certain return to materialism and realism is felt everywhere. It has become obvious that closed information networks are dependent on material factors that cannot be fully controlled because they escape the circulation of immaterial data. This is one of the reasons why the fear of cosmic catastrophe has become so widespread in contemporary culture. In the period of modernity we grew accustomed to understanding human beings as determined by the social milieu in which they live, as knots in the

information network, as organisms dependent on their environment. In the times of globalization we have learned that we are dependent on all that happens around the globe—politically, economically, ecologically. But the Earth is not isolated in the Cosmos. The planet depends on processes that occur in cosmic space—in dark matter, waves and particles, stellar explosions and galactic collapses. And the fate of humankind also depends on these cosmic processes because cosmic waves and particles pass through human bodies. The positioning of the Earth in the cosmic whole thus determines the conditions under which living organisms can survive on its surface.

This dependence of humankind on uncontrollable and even unknown cosmic events is the source of a specifically modern anxiety—one can call it a cosmic anxiety. During the Cold War people feared the possibility of a nuclear war that would destroy the totality of our civilization. Though today collective human suicide seems a remote possibility, the Cold War left certain psychological traumas. Today, progress towards a radiant future does not seem to be guaranteed. And it is no accident that contemporary mass culture is so obsessed with visions of asteroids coming from deep cosmic space to destroy Earth. But this anxiety also has more subtle forms. For example, one can cite the “accursed share” developed by Georges Bataille.² According to this theory, the Sun sends more energy to the Earth than can be absorbed by the Earth, including the organisms living on its surface. After all efforts to use this energy to produce goods and raise the living standard of the population there remains a non-absorbed, unused remainder of solar energy. This remainder is necessarily destructive: it can be spent only through violence and war, or through ecstatic festivals and sexual orgies that channel and absorb this remaining energy through less dangerous activities. Thus, human culture and politics become determined by cosmic energies—forever shifting between order and disorder. Friedrich Nietzsche has described our material world as a place of the eternal battle between Apollonian and Dionysian forces, or, in other words, between Cosmos and chaos. There are two different ways of reacting to this battle: through an ecstatic embrace of chaos or through attempting to put the Cosmos under control and secure its victory over chaos. In the first case one celebrates chaos as an experience of the intensity of vital forces instead of merely consuming information about life, a return to pure presence and a way of reentering the irreversible flow of time. This option is seductive because it appeals to those vital forces inactive in the bodies of Internet users sitting in front of their computers.

But there is a different option: to make the whole Cosmos into the field of transformation through work, to develop and realize a plan that would place the entire Cosmos under human control. Of course, this project relies first of all on the development of human science and technology. But there is also a social and political component. And it was especially the artists and thinkers of the Russian avant-garde and early revolutionary period that tended to embrace this second option. In their first manifesto in 1922 the representatives of the Biocosmists-Immortalists—a political party with roots in Russian anarchism—wrote: “We take the essential and real right of man to be the right to exist (immortality, resurrection, rejuvenation) and the freedom to move in cosmic space (and not the supposed rights announced when the bourgeois revolution was declared in 1789).” (5) Aleksandr Svyatogor, one of the leading Biocosmist theoreticians, considered the achievement of immortality to be both the goal and prerequisite for a future communist society, since true social solidarity could only reign among immortals: death separates people; private property cannot truly be eliminated when every human being still owns a private piece of time. Total biopower suggests the collectivisation not only of space but also of time. In eternity, conflicts between individual and society are eliminated that cannot be eliminated in time. The goal of immortality is thus the highest goal for each individual. And the individual will always remain

faithful to a society making this its goal. At the same time, only such a total society can make it possible for people to experience life not only without temporal limits, but also without spatial limits: the communist society of immortals will also be “interplanetary”—it will occupy the entire space of the Cosmos.

These biopolitical projects may have been utopian, but they stimulated the development of actual scientific and technological programs. Among the most spectacular and influential of them was the early rocket science Konstantin Tsiolkovsky developed with the goal of transporting our resurrected ancestors to other planets; and which became the starting point of Soviet space travel. Tsiolkovsky’s many writings were not only strictly technical, but also devoted to the social organisation of the universe. Tsiolkovsky still believed strongly in human creativity, even though he saw the human being in the great biopolitical tradition as a mere body—a thing that, by definition, could not be creative. Most of Tsiolkovsky’s writings centered on solving this philosophical problem, and his solution consisted in establishing the human brain as merely a specific and purely material part of the universe. Thus, all of the processes that take place in the human brain are ultimately processes with their origin in the whole universe: the will of an individual human is at the same time the will of the universe. Human creativity is an expression of the creativity of the universe. Many artists of the early avant-garde also dreamt of traveling through cosmic space. Thus, Kazimir Malevich suggested that individual apartment units should be constructed to allow them to be transported into space. They should then become “flying cities” over the surface of the Earth.⁽³⁾ Here, cosmic space presents itself as the last frontier—not as a danger of possible catastrophe but as the last endeavor that can unite the whole of humankind. This hope that the exploration of cosmic space can make all cultural and ethnic divisions irrelevant can be found also in many sci-fi novels and films. And in our time of identity politics, the Cosmos functions as the last remaining horizon of universalism—not religious or ideological, but materialist universalism. Cosmos unites not our souls but our bodies, integrating them into the material processes of the universe.

From my first contact with Slovenian artistic culture, I was deeply impressed by the degree of its openness to the universalist perspective. Already the architecture of Jože Plečnik signals a desire to establish contact not only with world history but also with the mystical and mythical components of cosmic life, and to do so in an absolutely modern way. It is always problematic to cite individual artists’ positions because it can create an impression of undue privilege. Nevertheless, one cannot overlook the work of Dragan Živadinov related to the Noordung (Herman Potočnik) cosmic spaceship, or the work by Marko Pogačnik, whose approach to the materiality of Earth and Cosmos has a more individualistic and intuitive dimension. One also cannot overlook the attachment of many Slovenian artists, including the artists of the younger generation, to the utopian vision of Malevich and of the early Russian avant-garde in general. This vision still informs many Slovenian art practices—especially when referred to in a critical, ironic or absurdist way. I am very glad that my suggestion was echoed positively by so many Slovenian artists. And I am grateful to the artists—Slovenian and non-Slovenian—who contributed their works to the exhibition.

I am especially thankful to Zdenka Badovinac and Igor Španjol for supporting the realization of the exhibition in all stages of its development. Without their support and work, the exhibition would not have been possible.

.....

1 Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth*, Telos Press Publishing, 2006, p. 43ff.

2 Georges Bataille, *Accursed Share*, Vol. 1, Zero Books, 1991, p. 21f.

Jože Baršič The Gap between Departing and Arriving Demons/ Suppositions

the concept that seems most archaic and contaminated in the framework of contemporary artistic practices—the concept of the sublime, and examine whether the concept of sublimation is still useful or operative in contemporary art. This introduction implies a kind of reservation towards the concept which comes from artistic practices of the 1990s that did not look favorably on the sublime (here, I mainly refer to a part of modernism, e.g. sublime painting). My position in this respect is therefore not neutral at all. Namely, in modernism, sublime was anything that was unwanted by contemporary artistic practices. Glorification, mysteriousness, awe, the cult of the high, “beyond the comfort zone”—these associations related to the sublime were completely foreign to the generations of artists of the 1990s. We were much closer to the anti-retinal art which Duchamp spoke about, as opposed to the art “accessible only to the sight” which was thought to be too formalistic. In a way, the 1960s idea of an art that is free of formal rules and associates with the fight for political freedoms is still alive today and at first glance it is as such hard to reconcile with the concept of sublimation. After all, the idea was born in mid-18th century (Burke, Kant, etc.), a time when the art as practiced today was virtually unknown. If the concept of sublimation acted in a manner that sought to liberate the “threatening” world, or even better, to domesticate the world, and became less operative in relation to the “liberated” world, then I wonder if it is not becoming popular again as we turn into the vast cosmic outer space, which is terrifying in its dimensions yet attractive at the same time...

Translated by Darja Horvatič

Marko Batista The Techno-Sublime in DIY Electronics

The sublime, as a concept of aesthetics, is elevated above the sheer perception of the beautiful and it denotes the sentiment between pleasure and pain. In contemporary art, the role of the sublime belongs, above all, to technology that produces the so-called techno-sublime¹ and, elevated above the beautiful, transpires as an intense experience for the viewer involved in an art event. The tension of the experience of Marko Batista’s microrobotic machines is the product of an almost invisible technological revolution,² which takes place in art studios, living rooms, garages, media labs and ad hoc fab labs.³ In the 21st century, when a billion of people have access to high-tech equipment, the initial enthusiasm for technology, which was bound to ever new and ever more efficient gadgets, has come to an end. We have reached the point where the DIY community, with joint forces and persistent activities against the closed-source system, has developed open operating systems and software tools to such a degree of stability that we can perform uninterruptedly all functions of closed systems without any unwanted collapse. At the same time, because of better access to information, the fear of invasive technologies, changing behavioural and cultural patterns in society, has numbed; now, it is limited to the level of political and corporative manipulation of data, while it has disappeared, to a large extent, from the level of society and culture. The time has come when the DIY community is slowly moving from the field of constructing the basic functions of open-source systems and programmes to the field of interfaces and hardware. Compared to the former, the latter is even more effective at the epistemological and semiotic levels, for it is interfaces, above all, that determine the system of categorisations, which has by now developed to the level of hypertextuality. In

turn, artists, such as Batista, as well as theorists are developing systems in which – with purposeful glitch, circuit bending and the introduction of chemical and organic elements into electronic circuits – they expand the limits of interface outputs and hardware functions. With its dynamic interfaces, Batista’s work contributes towards the critique of conventions, which encourages the replacement of established screen format, the sequence of letters on the keyboard, the layout of buttons on the mouse, menus, browsers, applications, to change radically the mode of using computers and technological tools. The basic building blocks of the artist’s media installations and audio-visual performances are based on open-source, free hardware and software, which generate unpredictable situations, glitches in the transmission of image, noisy sound effects at the edge of all meanings. Electronic and digital transmissions of this kind are metaphors for the information processes that take place in the post-information age, when the machines, using the analysis of the semantic tools of web 3.0, sometimes know individuals even better than their fellow human beings do. The production of DIY sound transmitters is an anti-consumerist gesture based on simple, cheap and unstable electronic systems, which makes possible open use and access for the DIY community as well as the gallery audience. The former uses and upgrades practical results, while the latter consumes an extremely different version of technological products; instead of generic products, it experiences all the ugliness and beauty, the pleasure and pain of DIY sounds and electronics. This is a rejection of the existing systems and processes, which would depend on the established social structures; for the sensitive individual experiences the greatest unease precisely when facing shiny corporative goods, which are the product of careful market and psychological assessments, for they prescribe desires, results and modes of application in advance. “Their instincts tell them to rebel against this “obedient” mode in which artists – like everyone else – are pushed into continually buying, from ever-growing corporations, the latest computer and the latest software packages and then spending a vast number of hours learning how to use them. There’s an inescapable love-hate ambivalence about working as an artist with hightechnology tools.”⁴ Batista prefers to use this time for the exploration of electronic circuits, learning about the physical properties of sound and other laws of physics and chemistry. The building blocks of his systems are based on a logic that is part of alternative DIY, dynamic systems. While doing so, he forms a hypothesis about (computer) hardware, which will be infinitely more efficient and will have lower consumption, a specific purpose and an open system, which would stimulate heterogeneity and personal contact with systems, in contrast to uniform systems, which develop generic interfaces. Two products of this revolution are the Raspberry Pi computer and the Arduino microcontroller, which Batista integrates into his works. However, the greatest part of the electronic skeleton of microrobotic machines is based on smaller and less complete derivatives of this technological movement. Even though such systems by no means affect the changing of economic relations directly, they do raise consciousness, which encourages thinking that differs from the self-evident tracks of the current consumerist relations of capital.

Ida Hiršenfelder

Excerpted from: Ida Hiršenfelder, “MicroRobotic Machines”, in: Andreja Hribernik, Ida Hiršenfelder, Jurij Krpan, Luka Zagoričnik, *Marko Batista: Temporary Objects and Hybrid Ambients*, (Ljubljana: Aksioma - Zavod za sodobno umetnosti & Slovenj Gradec: Koroška galerija likovnih umetnosti, 2014), pp. page 61-65.

.....

1 The term techno-sublime has been attributed to Kittler’s work *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* by the interpreters of Kittler’s media theory, even though the author himself does not use precisely this term; rather, Kittler talks about technology that, due to mechanical reproduction, causes “the boundaries of the body, death and lust, leave the most indelible traces” (Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 55).

2 On account of my conversation with Luka Zagoričnik, I must admit a certain measure of immoderate optimism regarding the meanings produced by the DIY community; for the latter, too, uses electronic components produced, on the one hand, by corporations and, on the other hand, by the underpaid and exploited labour force in East-Asia. In this context, the DIY community faces a similar paradox as the ecological movement.

3 A fab lab is a smaller workshop offering (individual) production of digital elements.

4 Collins, *Handmade Electronic Music*, op. cit., pp. xi-xii.

Boris Beja vrtača

The apartment is cold. Very bright in daytime.

She starts very early in the morning. She only stops for lunch, with a break for a cup of tea in between, to allow the strings to settle, to cool down.

The best part is the tuning of the instrument, when the bow follows the shape of the bridge and the sound of the string colors with another, into thirds, fifths or fourths.

Sometimes I hear her from the top of our street on my way home. The light in the hallway disrupts her, reminding her it's time to rest.

We have organized our lives past each other. We have different schedules, work, rhythm, gait, the way we open doors, including those on the kitchen cabinets and the refrigerator. We stay out of each other's way and sometimes we are happy not to meet, and are pleased to have gone the whole day without our eyes meeting. But the sound of the instrument remains. Filling all the rooms of our home.

The sound even travels down the drain, to our neighbors and across, even through the glass and out into the street.

she plays.

She plays the game. And plays over and over.

At times, the bow travels smoothly along the strings, at others with difficulty, making me wonder why the neck or the body don't break under the strain, the anger, the effort, the persistence, the games.

We are both disciplined.

I create my works in the dining room to the sounds of the violin, works I can close, put away, mute, hide. Her art, on the other hand, is all around and next to me all the time.

Sometimes I manage to tune it out, at other times I find it harder to concentrate and work.

Now the bow travels along the strings somewhere else. The noise has been replaced by silence and emptiness.

This is like a way
into
the cosmos,

like the climax in the Adagietto of Mahler's Fifth Symphony, when the strings crescendo to forte, the harp resonates into thunder and the last bit on the way to the finale is provided by the double bass.

Goran Bertok on the Cosmos and Other Things

If we are to free ourselves of our consciousness of the dictatorship of gravity, of the dictatorship of our bodies and our bowels, we need a powerful idea.

To what extent has my life, up until this point, depended on cosmic processes? Do I suffer from cosmic anxiety? Do I feel cosmic waves and cosmic particles travelling through my body? Should I celebrate or deplore the fact (?!) that the cosmos melds and incorporates our bodies into universal material processes (and I will return to those less complicated forms of existence of the matter, and take no comfort whatsoever in the fact that I am made of the same stuff as the universe)? Or should I ignore those questions, listening rather to the nonsensical and somehow soothing babble of astrologists and letting myself be assigned a place in the universe, among the constellations of planets, which explain and arrange everything so nicely?

It would seem that nothing in the universe affects me in any significant way. I do feel some sort of satisfaction at the thought that humanity will some day be able to reach other galaxies and survive the death of the Sun. I reject the probability that in the near future, whether within my lifetime or later, the Earth might suffer a devastating meteorite strike. I follow the landing of the space probe on the comet. I like to watch meteors. But it seems that in a sense it is with the universe as it is with our own deaths: we know that both one and the other exist, we are certain of this, yet it somehow eludes our comprehension. Mostly we live ignoring one and the other, practically and pragmatically.

What is much closer to me is the universe of my own body. This closeness, this obviousness, this condemnation. And the foreignness of something that escapes me and will kill me one day. Those people who will journey to the stars will probably have bodies more like the bodies of gods than like our own. They will have rid themselves of this humiliating dependency and of some of the body's limitations. Yet in all likelihood, this will happen in some other time, not mine. For myself, I can't escape my own ass. Even if I were to take off to the farthest reaches of our galaxy, my ass will follow me. Maybe I need to go even further than that!

Translated by Katja Zakrajšek

The Body of Confucius Curators: Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming, with Jeffrey Shaw

Curatorial Statement

The traditional cosmology and system of knowledge known as *li*, usually translated as Confucian Rites, bore the brunt of critical attacks by modern reformers at the beginning of the 20th century. To the modern Chinese, *li* is now one of the most remote and unintelligible aspects of China's cultural past. And yet *li* has always lied at the heart of China's civilisational

order: In pre-modern days, relations at all levels of society were informed by an intuitive understanding of *li*: whether it be court officials or village neighbours, literate or illiterate. As a cosmology, *li* has fostered the social and personal cultivation that allow the Chinese person to navigate the world. Any discussion of the 'Chinese spirit' would be incomplete if it fails to include the system of *li*.

Li research provides a conceptual framework for unwrapping concepts surrounding that area of experience and knowledge that in modern times has mainly been framed in Western terms of 'art' (*yi shu*) and 'aesthetics' (*shen mei*). As a system of awareness and 'practice', *li* offers a barometer for gauging the rapid changes that are taking place in Chinese people's sensibilities in the course of modernisation, especially in terms of their physical body and their 'livingness'. The tradition of *li* also highlights the potential of art as a harmonising force in attuning new sensibilities to society – a significant mission of art in view of the fluidity of social relations in contemporary times.

Confucian *li* is a civilizational framework that covers the realms of aesthetics, ethics and ideology. It is also a technique of the body, a skill that can be learnt and inscribed. 'Re-making' Confucian *li* is relevant today as an important alternative system of knowledge, and a shining historical example of 'aesthetics as politics' (not politicized aesthetics). Research projects we are undertaking address the following related issues:

1. The 'archaeology of the modern'. Becoming 'modern' implies a radically revised regime of the body, and within this regime is embedded the ideology of the Chinese 'modern'. A crucial question about Chinese modernity is: How was the 'Chinese modern body' constructed? What process did it take?
2. How does social order manifest itself physically in the social body? Asking the question in reverse: How does a Self come into its own through claiming a social-body as its own? What technique/skill must the Self acquire to negotiate with society, and maintain an appropriate distance from the State at the same time?
3. Within a State system, how might a social-body such as *li* be deployed for some form of tribal self-determination? (i.e. as a means for resistance and creativity?) How might a technique based on the Self become a national/international language of the social-body?

BridA/Tom Kerševan, Sendi Mango,
Jurij Pavlica Tracked Houston

The view from the tallest building in the city, the JPMorgan Chase Tower

On the left is the Bank of America financial center, by architect Philip Johnson. Next comes The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, and down below in the center, beside the arts center, stands the hanging tree. Next to it a signboard reads: "Many stories attached to the 400-year old history of this live oak. Some say that during the days of the Republic of Texas (1836-1845), at least 11 criminals were hanged from its graceful boughs." Although others dispute such tales, the legend lives on. The center of the city, or downtown Houston, is separated from the suburbs by the wide expanse of the Gulf Freeway or Interstate 45, the main traffic artery between the Gulf of Mexico and the major cities of the state of Texas.

The *Trackeds* project was created in 2008, the result of a residency organized by the Ratti Foundation, Como (I) and headed by architect Yona Friedman. The project is built on researching dynamic structures in urban spaces and analyzing super-automated systems that collect and process captured data, with a special emphasis on building data-based or visual content with the use of cybernetic applications.

Sophisticated surveillance systems can also be understood as a giant network of contemporary vistas of landscapes and cityscapes. The views are not, however, captured with the purpose of creating beautiful and charming panoramas; their primary aim is to collect data on people and their activities and provide “security.” Interestingly, these systems are so highly automated and autonomous that they are becoming the sole end users and, paradoxically, the sole “admirers” of the captured images.

While preserving the original format of surveillance systems, the *Trackeds* project does not assume the function of surveillance. It creates an image that is then offered up to be admired. Although the data is captured from the microcosm of specific locations, the project has a global orientation. The focus of interest is not personal data or the static properties of an object, but on a body of reduced dynamic properties from which global patterns can be derived, patterns that could present space and time differently, in the form of an artwork.

Traces recorded by motion tracking software are drawn on top of a projection of a static reference picture of the place the data was captured, creating a dynamic drawing. The automated image is produced by a software application that combines the diverse body of information into a multilayered composition. Functioning as a hybrid form, the visual representation opens up different views of the chosen location, in layers from the substratum of the unconscious, through historical elements to the science-based and empirically measured environment. Each layer of information presents another situation, adding to and at the same time erasing the perceptible image. The abstract algorithm and digital recording both contrast and fuse with the urban structural makeup of the environment. Sound is generated in relation to the position and density of the detected objects and builds a data-based synthesis of space and time. Historical elements intertwining with dynamic fragments of the present allow space and time to manifest non-linearly.

The collected data is saved as a finite set of numbers representing a correlation between space and time. Any given time flow can be observed as multilayered directions, velocities, accelerations and densities, together with their sums and differences that speak about the dynamics of a specific urban space. At the same time, the captured data also reflects the rules in place there, and traces the history that has established the order of the dynamics.

.....

Trackeds Houston was made in collaboration with the Center for Contemporary Art Research ALABAMA SONG, Houston, TX, and with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

Keti Chukhrov

Today’s ruminations on the non-human agencies claim that to achieve a planetary dimension of life on earth we need to get rid of our humanness. It is particularly odd that contemporary object-oriented ontologies – actor network theory, speculative materialism, accelerationism,

or biotechnological optimizations of mind (Metzinger) – are still confined to the geophysics of a single planet, and are returning to Ptolemaic constructs of the world centuries after the Copernican turn. Meanwhile in the Renaissance era it was precisely the discovery of the cosmological dimension of the universe that entailed the human condition and its social utopias. Nowadays the striving toward a global dimension of the world dismisses humanness as some kind of fossil remaining in the constraints of national countries, cultural localities, folk politics, limited intelligences and similar. Conversely, at the outset of the modern era the cosmic dimension coincided with the rise of humanism and the incomprehensibility of cosmos only served to confirm it as the true universal surroundings of the human mind and its quests. The cosmos was not treated as alien, despite being largely inscrutable, whereas today what is imagined as alien comes closer and closer, invading human bodies and minds. Thus any automatic extension or technological invention is a priori treated as an alien presence, and is either fetishized or defied; any computed capacity or manmade mechanical agency stands for something converse to human. This is definitely a syndrome of the capitalist condition: everything is alienated, reified and externalized, but to be alienated is even desired – and desirable. Only total externalization and self-alienation can bring the confidence to handle what is alienated, abstracted, ungraspable. Thus it is only natural that with such logic even the simple prosthesis is alien, or now-standard cybernetic programming performed by man seems a macabre invasion of inhuman intelligence. This is because the condition of the Universal turns in this case into mere nominalized abstraction, but such abstraction is far from the generality of the concept in the Hegelian sense. In communism the logic would be different: even the things that are remote, abstract, inconceivable and universal would become part and parcel of concrete mundane life and its social imaginaries.

Jasmina Cibic The Pavilion

A metonym for architecture as a whole, the façade is an element most invested with political and cultural meaning. The contemporary spectator is trained to focus on the façade to the detriment of other elements. Compared to the floor, the walls, the roof, the door or the window, it is a remarkably young architectural concept. Once established, it embodies the composition, profile, signification and monumentality of a building. Its codes of representation embed themselves in our neurological wiring, triggering Pavlovian reactions to certain types of architecture. Functioning as the envelope of a building, the purpose of a façade is to represent and entice the viewer.

An example of such seduction is the design for the National Pavilion of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia built at the Barcelona World Exposition in 1929 by the Serbian architect Dragiša Brašovan. Brašovan achieved great international acclaim at the Exposition and won the Grand Prix, the highest award at the event. But due to the political intrigues of other nation states, Brašovan went on to lose first place to the German Pavilion and its world-renowned architect Ludwig Mies Van Der Rohe. According to Brašovan's memoirs, Van Der Rohe spoke to the jury members and convinced them to overturn their decision and award the first prize to him. Known today simply as the Barcelona Pavilion, this emblematic work of the Modern Movement has greatly influenced the aesthetics of architecture since.

After the exposition, the Yugoslav Pavilion was disassembled like all other temporary structures built for the occasion. But mysteriously, unlike the others, the Yugoslav one left behind only few traces of its existence. There are some photographs of its exterior: one photograph depicting the side elevations; an aerial image of its wider architectural context

and a photograph of the Spanish king's visit. There is also a site plan of the grounds where it was placed. Based on these, a 1:7 scale model of the original Pavilion was made. This scale replicates the ratio of a standard Lego brick compared to a standard house brick.

With only partial information about the building, the model uses other appropriate historical designs to recreate its most likely form and ornamentation.

The Pavilion had a striking façade entirely covered in black and white horizontal stripes spaced about 30 cm apart. An uncannily similar example of this decoration was found in a well-documented but unrealized project by the eminent architect Adolf Loos designed a year prior to Brašovan's Yugoslav Pavilion. Adolf Loos's plans were for the Parisian residence of Josephine Baker, the American-born dancer, singer and black civil rights activist, also known as Black Pearl.

Loos had an opulent space in mind for the Baker House interior. He planned for an indoor pool, where its resident could swim whilst being observed by spectators drinking coffee in the overlooking bar. It had the makings of a peep show, housing desire for the spectator's pleasure. The interior of the Yugoslav Pavilion also performed as an exhibition space. It was designed to present the latest industrial achievements of the nation to the Expo's international audience. But how this actually looked remains unclear. One photograph of the original interior does exist. But it was impossible to reference it when the model was being constructed, as the document's owner was on a research trip to Paris.

So, the interior of the Baker House was transplanted into the model of the Yugoslav Pavilion, a logical solution to the missing information, given the noteworthy similarities between the designs of the two buildings.

As often suggested, stripes exaggerate the dimensions of a surface or figure: horizontal stripes emphasize width, while vertical stripes add an impression of height, as demonstrated by the Helmholtz square illusion. Stripes never lost their pejorative connotation and allusion to deception. Throughout history they have been associated with prostitutes and other social outcasts, even appearing on prison uniforms as the stripes made it easier to spot escapees in a crowd.

The site plan of the Yugoslav Pavilion shows a distinct sharp-edged star shape design coupled with a tall thin architectural protrusion. Research does suggest this form emulated the shape of a ship's bow.

The Pavilion had a striking façade entirely covered in black and white horizontal stripes spaced about 30 cm apart. But there is no documentation to show how the patterns on the adjacent surfaces met. The model of the Pavilion reconstructed the missing façade information by applying dazzle camouflage technique to its exterior.

Dazzle camouflage or razzle dazzle was a type of ship camouflage used during World War I and credited to the artist Norman Wilkinson. Dazzle consisted of complex patterns of geometric shapes in contrasting colors, interrupting each other at different geometric edges. This made it difficult to estimate the ship's direction, size and speed. A game of optics. A tactical trick to control appearances.

Wilkinson's designs have been compared to the revolutionary Modern art movement called cubism. Although an overlap exists in the appearance of dazzle and cubist art,

Wilkinson himself was anything but a modernist. In fact, he was a celebrated marine painter commissioned to create paintings for the elegant smoking rooms on board the Titanic and the Olympic.

Lenka Đorojević & Matej Stupica Neur-O-Matic

Nevromat, a compound formed analogically to *avtomat*, derived from Slovene *nevro-/nevr-* ‘relating to the nerves’ borrowed via modern Indo-European languages (German, English) from Ancient Greek τὸ νεῦρον ‘sinew, tendon, nerve’ < **neh₁-u-ŕ*, related to Latin *nervus* ‘sinew, tendon’, Sanskrit *snāvan* ‘tendon, muscle’, Old High German. *sen(a)wa* ‘tendon’, Toharic B *ṣñaura* ‘tendon, nerve’; all from PIE *(s)*neh₁-* ‘to weave, to spin’, and the suffixoid *-mat* which forms lexemes meaning ‘to perform [the action of the root] without external influence/ on its own accord’. The suffixoid is derived from the grammaticalized second part of the Greek exocentric compound *αὐτό-ματος* ‘moving without external influence’ (cf. Il. 5, 749 /.../ αὐτόμαται δὲ πύλαι μύκον οὐρανοῦ /.../ ‘and self-bidden groaned upon their hinges the gates of heaven’); *-ματος* literally meaning ‘thinking, animated’ derives from the zero grade of the PIE root **men-* (thus < PIE **mḥ-tó-s*) meaning ‘to think’, cf. root-related lexemes Latin *mēns* ‘mind’, *meminisse* ‘to remember’, *mentiō* ‘mentioning’, Greek *μνήμη* ‘remembrance’, *μαίνεσθαι* ‘to rage, to go mad’, Sanskrit *mānyate* ‘to think’, *māntrah* ‘counsel, prayer, hymn’ and Old Church Slavonic *měniti* ‘to mention’.

Blaž Božič

(Translated by the author)

.....

Abbreviation: PIE = Proto-Indo-European

1 Translation by A.T. Murry

Femkanje Radio Mapping the Independent Scene

The notion of the cosmos presents itself as a paradox. The events that are uncontrollable and even beyond the rational mind potentially lay claim to any individual or collective human intent. This omnipotent agent of totality, besides being capable of sanctioning human will and existence, simultaneously offers us the furthest horizon of collective human knowledge and endeavor. A utopia, a god’s domain and an actuality of material universalism.

It is rather frustrating to think of the cosmos in terms of paradox. However, it should not be overlooked that those very paradoxical findings of early 20th century science advanced our understanding of the world and gave birth to quantum mechanics and technology as we know it today. Niels Bohr’s principle of complementarity, which he postulated in 1928 and which he argued should be accepted as a universal principle in both intellectual and scientific domains, explains how an apparent paradox in observation is but a matter of aspect (apparatus) and timing of the analysis.

Femkanje is conceived to create (media) space and enable communication between authors and audience, speakers and listeners, with the intent of presenting and promoting contemporary independent creators from Serbia and the Balkans. Outside of the overly aestheticized visual media communication and institutional paradigms, we advocate gender equality and enable the unheard voices of cultural domain to be heard in all their complexities.

In terms of aspects and timing when considering the notion of the cosmos, we could say that our perspective on the system at large is the one of chaos.

Being citizens of a country that changed its name three times during the course of our lifetimes, went into a state of war twice and witnessed a coup d'état, the ever-shifting relation of order and chaos in culture and politics feels exorbitantly eminent. Prolonged reconstruction of the National Museum of Art in Belgrade (closed since 2003) and the Contemporary Museum of Art in Belgrade (closed since 2008), pulverized national funds for culture and associations of cultural workers, nonexistent long-term planning of cultural politics and censored and monopolized media—partly by ruling political forces and/or capital entering the country in 'transition', leave us with nothing more than a feeling of abandonment.

Disunited from the previous YU utopia and on the threshold of the EU utopia, two decades after the Yugoslav wars, the south Balkan countries are diagnosed with the rise of nationalism on the one side and Yugo nostalgia (especially among younger generations) on the other. The sense that only artists (citizens) can help themselves and that the relief from their anxieties comes from gathering energies and opening up the (media) space, is the very reason why we engaged ourselves in Femkanje. Furthermore, the contemporary art and cultural scene in general are being all too easily fated with no value and significance to socio-political life, adding to the fact that Serbia is still in the midst of the so called "brain drain". This devastated cultural landscape of the region gives us the perspective of the cosmos, or rather cosmic anxiety, not as an inability of managing the events beyond the globe, not even beyond the state, but singularly beyond an individual. We have heard it all too often just how much our guests are immersed in solving existential problems, managing their own corners of the universe, essentially being constrained to think larger.

Artists working in this culture-political atmosphere of perpetual crisis in Serbia, and to a certain extent in all former Yugoslav countries, are Schrödinger's black cats. Simultaneously both dead and alive, they have the power to change the world and no capability of securing health care, steady income, structural support or larger visibility for their continuous work. Accordingly, Schrödinger's thought experiment shows how the paradox of black cat being both dead and alive collapses in the moment of observation, conveying one of the two possible states. When we opened the box, we found the artists alive.

It seems quite paradoxical that these cultural workers are still finding the strength and constancy to work in the present conditions of highly unstable (cultural) politics. It is a fruitless investment in culture in collapse it seems, and at the same time the mode of self-preservation and preservation of utopia(s) that seem lost to so many. The perpetual confrontation with paradoxes and the resulting anxieties are the prime impetus that enables these cultural actors to act, but disables them to identify with the scene of conditionally abandoned, independent artists. We are yet to find a person who has declined our invitation to guest.

Coming to terms with present ambiguities and ceaseless angst, we embraced the chaos and set to form an image of order in the cosmos of our contemporaries. In the installation Radio Mapping the Independent Scene, sixty-four shows of the first series and more than seventy interlocutors are played synchronously, thus allowing for these agents of totality to be heard in one voice. Today, in our second series and with new guests based in the Balkans and other EU countries, we are expanding our apparatus of observation and we will continue to do so.

Vadim Fishkin Choose Your Day

One of Fishkin's projects, *Choose Your Day* (2005), is an "experiment" with light that makes the viewer hover between a product of rational planning and the imagination. Partly using material on hand, the installation offers the viewer both a comforting, homey intimacy (a cozy armchair with a reading lamp) and a feeling of detachment from the outside world, a sense of being sealed off. Reassured by the illusion of authority – an electronic panel with buttons stands next to the armchair like a giant remote control – the viewer begins this journey through space and time by switching to the setting and backdrop that best fits his mood: a winter evening, a sunny day, a rainy day, a sunset, a stormy night, a full moon, or somewhere on Mars.

The scenic environment created in the closed-circuit world of the gallery is overwritten by a subtle play: a real-time illusion of space opens up, enticing the viewer with its "make yourself at home" atmosphere, while the scenario also demands the viewer's deliberate efforts to divorce himself from the routine experiences associated with watching movies or television.

As with *A Speedy Day*, these models of scientific realism wrapped in cinematic spectacle offer the viewer the chance of an imaginary voyage in an illuminated empty room as well as a way to pass the time in the lonely outpost of a white cube. Fishkin's version of "Mystery Science Theater"¹ captivates the audience with lighting, color, and sound, as well as special effects designed in direct proportion to the viewer's familiarity with them. In a way, Fishkin's constructions are contiguous with the holistic and interdisciplinary outlook of Friedrich Kiesler,² who wanted his *Vision Machine* to demonstrate "that neither light, nor eye, nor brain, alone or in association, can see. But rather, we see only through the total coordination of human experiences; and even then, it is our own conceived image, and not really the actual object which we perceive. We learn, therefore, that we see by creative ability and not by mechanical reproduction."³

Livia Páldi

Excerpted from: Livia Páldi, "Partial View; Vadim Fishkin's Dream of Reason", in: *Vadim Fishkin: Orbit Edges*, Gurgur Editions, JRP Ringier, 2007.

.....

1 *Mystery Science Theater 3000* (1988–1999), usually abbreviated MST3K, is a cult television comedy series created by Joel Hodgson featuring a man and his robot sidekicks who are trapped on a satellite in space and forced to watch particularly bad movies; see the official website <www.mst3kinfo.com>.

2 Frederick [Friedrich] Kiesler (1890–1965) was an Austrian-born American architect, artist, designer, set designer, and theorist.

3 Frederick Kiesler, "Brief Description of *Vision Machine*" (ca. 1940–1942), typescript in the Kiesler Archive, Austrian Frederick and Lillian Kiesler Foundation, Vienna; the passage quoted is available online at <www.monde-sinventes.com/site_c/vision_machine/catalogue.htm> (accessed 10 July 2006).

Maja Hodošček If You Remember, I Always Talked about the Future

IB: The protagonist of the film *If You Remember, I Always Talked about the Future* is clearly fascinated by the figure of Tito. Despite the temporal discontinuity – seeing that he hadn't

been born before the breakup of Yugoslavia – he brings a fictional message in the manner of Tito’s speeches. What is your view on this escape into the past for a promise of a future?

MH: My initial interest in this work was how a certain historical era or political idea is perceived in the absence of an experience, vicariously through images, reminiscences, archives, etc. that help one produce meaning through mental images. The protagonist of the film is truly fascinated by the socialist era, but never experienced it himself. This proximity and distance of a historical era are both the point of departure of the film and the source of a certain discomfort that is difficult to put into words. In the film, this discomfort takes the form of a utopian attempt to imitate the former and only President of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. Thus rather than an escape into the past this can be understood in terms of the impossibility of articulating a position in the present.

IB: As we watch the protagonist we see the awkwardness of his speech, giving us the sense that he is rehearsing for a public performance. Also, he is very exposed, yet he addresses an empty theater. Why was this type of representation, completely opposite the propagandic representation of Tito, important?

MH: The video did not aim to create a spectacular image or promote some message; instead its structure is centered on a discrepancy. The video itself is full of clashing elements, one of them being the absence of an audience at a public performance. The speech delivered by the protagonist addresses young people, the imitator tries to imagine what Tito’s message to the young would be today. But these same young people are not present; the empty hall is indicative of the absence of the collective, pointing to the very moment of connectedness as completely impossible. The search for the missing link is perceptible in repetition, rehearsal, in the attempts to find the right tone of voice...

IB: Young people as a political subject are often quite central to your work. In what ways is this apparent in this film?

MH: I’ve largely been working with primary and high-school students for a number of years now. I’m interested in the possible political activation of the young, and even more in the institutional framework of school and the way it affects how individuals operate. The first theme is quite personal. I was not a good student in high school; I did not believe in school as an institution, but was rather interested in everything else, in a wide variety of fields, and art in particular. But, quite obviously, I’m still hounded by the issue of institutional education – after all, I am an art teacher by education. My personal experience has led me to try to loosen up the established institutional system through my own artistic practice. I try to create situations within the school that stimulate the students’ responsiveness, creativity, and critical thinking. I am interested in what their real needs are and how they are being met in the context of the school. In the video, this interest is expressed in a number of ways. There is the chosen theme, developed out of one student’s fascination, which in turn leads to the presentation of specific teaching content in a different way, through a series of questions. Next, my works are generally not based on some prior script; only a framework is determined, then things are allowed to evolve freely. For the most part they are made with the contributions of all those involved. In this particular case, the protagonist of the film wrote the speech himself, without any suggestions or corrections on my part, he chose the costume himself, and dictated the course of events. I find this approach great, because it also puts me in a somewhat precarious position, leaving room for coincidence and improvisation. It’s a pretty flexible and informal MO, and I see a certain political potential in this as well – we don’t have that many opportunities for this type of open encounters in life.

IB: Which song connects you to the cosmos?

MH: It's not a song, but rather a phase of my life that reminds me of a specific atmosphere. In the 1990s and later there were a lot of rave parties in Celje, and the feeling at these was really good – like being a part of a community. I also remember that it did not feel like we were living in a small town back then; just the opposite, I felt part of something urban.

The interview with the artist was conducted by curator Irena Borić from Zagreb.

.....

Irena Borić is a curator and art critic. She has taken part in the projects *Ekonomije ljubavi/Politike osjećaja* (2011), *Srami se!* (2013-) and *net.cube* (2015-). Recent curating efforts include the exhibitions *Ako ti ispričam priču, hoćeš li zaboraviti?* (2013), *Politike znotraj* (2014), *U mojoj zemlji palme rastu* (2014), *Akrobacije s kamenjem* (2014), *Pipe Dream* (2015) and *Skretanje pogleda* (2015). She writes occasionally for the newspaper *Zarez* and for Radio Študent. She is a member of the Croatian section of AICA. Currently she lives in Maribor.

Ištvan Išt Huzjan A Reaction in a Reactor

Internationally renowned artist Ištvan Išt Huzjan's art melds unobtrusive intimacy, close observation of human activities going back to his early years, and, under the influence of his creative work, a sense of, and a sensibility for, everyday life. He is interested in art that understands production as alive not just during the creative process in the studio, but also in terms of its presentation to the viewers. In the art-historical sense, Huzjan's art refers primarily to the neo-conceptual practices of the 1960s, after "Happening" of Allan Kaprow (1926–2006), who pioneered the concept of performance art and described his work as a fusion of his life and his artistic practice, with no dividing line between life and the creation of art. Huzjan explores the way art originates before and during interaction with the viewer, for which he also won the Grand Prix of the 31st Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana last year. The compelling installation reflected (symbolically also in mirrors) a complex network of historical references and formal means in their many facets; it was a polyphony of nature and memory, of art history and the artist's intimate responses. Central to all of Huzjan's projects over the last decade and a half is a returning to recent history and to his own personal mythology. Since his years as a student, certain developments in society have been reflected in his work, even if on the subtlest of levels. His highly personal artistic sense was apparent already in his earliest projects and their respective titles: *Veliko tišine (A Lot of Silence)* at the Finžgar Gallery in Ljubljana in 2004 and *Jaz sem tisti večni otrok ... (I Am That Perennial Child...)* in the Meduza gallery in Koper in 2008. And so on – all the way up to last year's performance *Od tu do tu (From Here to Here)* at the Blum & Poe Gallery in Los Angeles. The artist keeps well abreast of developments in art at home and abroad, working in residencies, while traveling, or in one of the two countries between which he divides his time. Virtually all of his projects, artist's books and performances result from lengthy reflections, as does his latest work *Jedra (Nuclei)*.

The Reactor Center in Podgorica is part of the Jožef Stefan Institute. Architect Oton Jugovec (1921) won the Prešeren Foundation Award and the Plečnik Prize for the nuclear reactor building, whose form, reminiscent of a mushroom cloud, is an antipode to the natural landscape surrounding it. The external form of the reactor building is characterized by the shaved edges of the cube and the dome-shaped roof, which also create a special, unusual interior space. The building, which has been nominated as a monument of national

importance, is located amidst local fields. Half a century after its construction, the artistic object *Nuclei* was placed on the lawn that surrounds the building. Ištvan Išt Huzjan's artistic intervention is completely original, with few comparable cases in the history of art. When invited to participate in the exhibitions program of the Jožef Stefan Institute Gallery, Huzjan responded completely within the context of his artistic vision. Ever since his first idea for the project back in the fall of 2014, Huzjan had envisioned that his project with the working title *Reaction* would be exhibited next to the Reactor Center in Podgorica. His idea was to conceptually transform the reactor into a studio for some time; after the work had been realized he would transform the reactor surroundings into a *forma viva*, an outdoor sculpture park, by installing the art object *Nuclei*, made in the reactor, on the lawn in front of the reactor where it would work in harmony with Jugovec's building.

The Reactor Center in Podgorica near Ljubljana was constructed 50 years ago, and a TRIGA reactor was installed to provide a basis for collecting knowledge related to nuclear science and technology. This knowledge would later prove highly useful for the construction and operation of Slovenia's first nuclear power plant, and subsequently for monitoring radiation and safety analysis. From the beginning the Institute's research program has also been directed at research in the field of nuclear physics and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Now, 50 years later, due to technological demands, the issue of energy sources has again become a charged topic, especially in relation to the environment, something Huzjan points to with his artistic intervention. The Department of Low and Medium Energy Physics performs research on atomic and nuclear physics and is also engaged in radiological environmental protection, which involves monitoring nuclear facilities and environmental radioactivity. The department also operates the Ecological Laboratory with a mobile unit. Parallel to any technological progress is also awareness of these issues, which is fast increasing in the developed world, as is the search for renewable sources of energy – that is, ways of harvesting energy from ongoing natural processes that do not deplete the source. The multidisciplinary research of the Department of Environmental Sciences focuses on combining reciprocal physical, chemical and biological processes that influence our environment.

“By exploring the Institute's various activities I keep returning to exhibiting art and to the experience I had as a high-school student, when we visited the reactor in Podgorica on a school trip,” Huzjan recalls. The combination of Jugovec's monumental piece of architecture and the powerful atmosphere on the reactor's platform left a strong impression on the artist's memory. Today he could compare the experience of the reactor in Podgorica with the feeling of creating an artwork, he says. In particular, with the moment when an artist feels that a work is finished, without really knowing why. The artwork, or the worked matter, somehow shines, releasing some kind of new power, new life. Frightening, but also extremely beautiful and satisfying at the same time. “I believe the artistic process is quite similar to the utopian alchemistic process of turning stone to gold,” says the artist. Driven by the vivid memories from his youth, Ištvan Išt Huzjan conceived and carried out a small happening-performance in the central part of the Reactor Center in Podgorica. Together with a number of people working at the center who were favorably inclined toward his project since inception (and who were also responsible for the safety of the execution) he mixed a 25 kg-bag of cement, sand, and siccativ with water, triggering a reaction that led to the mixture solidifying into a unified body—a sculpture. After the mixture hardened, Huzjan removed the paper so that only the shape of the packaging remained. Not only did the new sculpture not require any further work, but the artist deliberately decided against it, since the form of the sculpture was secondary to the primary meaning of the project: the artist highlighted the event itself, which was best represented by the shape of the bag.

The resulting artwork was placed on the lawn in front of the Reactor Center building, where it serves as an attractive symbolic outdoor sculpture. Celebrated art theorist and philosopher Boris Groys (1947) and curator of the 8th U3 exhibition that he has conceptually framed under the title *Beyond the Globe*, has included Huzjan's production in the exhibition—more specifically, the now already realized object *Nuclei*. The fact that Huzjan's object is permanently displayed also represents the beginning of a new exhibition space for the Jožef Stefan Institute, an outdoor forma viva.

Tatjana Pregl Kobe

IRWIN The Corpse of Art

First, it is necessary to say a few words about the name, which is only indirectly related to the subject matter. In the mid-1980s, when we first began to exhibit *Was ist Kunst*, the series of paintings based on the appropriation of motifs, images, and styles of different artists, a privileged position among such was held by the Russian avant-garde, especially Kazimir Malevich. Furthermore, it is necessary to note that alongside the Malevich from Moscow, the Malevich from Belgrade was also an important point of reference. "The Corpse of Art" was the title of a review published in the *Delo* newspaper, which criticized the manner in which the paintings had been produced. The critic merely summarized and publicly uttered that which was then a more or less general opinion, i.e., that appropriation is only another name for copying, which turns into a corpse of art that which beforehand had been a living, full-blooded work of art.

In the installation *The Corpse of Art* we did not appropriate only Malevich's work, but also his body. We had several reasons for doing so:

- First we have to mention the importance that maintaining the image of a deceased person has had throughout the history of image creation, and on the other hand, the rarity of the occurrence of the image of a corpse in art at the end of the 20th century.
- In observing any of the brilliant hyper-realistic figures that have been produced in the desire to seem alive, it becomes clear that they are truly capable of bringing back to life only that which is dead. A good example of such is the installation *Woman on Bed* by the American sculptor John De Andrea, which is part of the collection of the MUMOK museum and which is becoming, due to the aging of the material that it is made of, an ever more convincing corpse.
- Furthermore, a number of photographs of Kazimir Malevich exist, but only a handful of unclear ones present him lying in bed a little before his death or already in the coffin. In both instances, his face is sunken and hirsute, which is why he looks completely different than he had before. It is a known fact that death alters a person's appearance—often to such a degree that they become unrecognizable, which is why any sunken face with a beard and surrounded by hair of a certain type and length could be recognized as Malevich's..
- Next comes the fact that Malevich was exhibited—lying in a coffin that had been designed by a student of his whose work Malevich had highly praised—in the House of the Union of Artists. There, a fairly large number of visitors saw him for one last time. Suetin designed his coffin as one of the "planits" or "architectons", which are an important segment of Malevich's body of work. This last planit is exceptional because it is very rare, possibly the only planit

that has an interior. Malevich did not design interiors for “architectons” but only exteriors. The cover of the coffin, which was leaning against the wall at the head of the coffin, bears the images of a circle and a square, which the corpse connected when the coffin was closed. At the same time, the coffin viewed from the front had the shape of a cross. On the other side of the coffin, also by the head of the deceased, was a vase with white lilies. These elements were arranged into a composition in front of a wall on which Malevich’s paintings were hanging. If today one saw anything similar in a gallery—and the House of the Union of Artists was a gallery—it would be hard not to notice the parallels with an art installation—especially if a set viewing time was determined and numerous other visitors were in the room besides the viewer. Malevich’s corpse found itself at the crossroads of two symbolic fields—the ritual of a burial ceremony, and the ritual of an exhibition opening—and their respective sets of principles and rules. What is interesting is the comparison with Lenin’s corpse and its preservation and transformation into an exhibit.

By taking into account all the above-mentioned facts, we have decided to perceive the event as a project that had been designed in advance and worked out to the last detail, as a work of art, which, however, the times were not yet ready to view and accept as such. Only all these years later, and following the development of art and the broadening of the set of what art could be, when today any such event can easily be perceived as a work of art, is it possible to assume that what is actually occurring here is Malevich’s final exhibition and that it was Malevich who truly conceived the installation that his corpse is a part of.

And even if such were not true, even if it were a mere coincidence or a series of coincidental decisions, the level of interweaving and harmony between them is as high as if they were the work of Kazimir Malevich.

*Borut Vogelnik, 2003
(Translated by Petra Zaranšek)*

Sergej Kapus *Futur Antérieur*

*Futur antérieur*¹, opens up a temporality that challenges the linear time frame. It breaks with causality where the cause precedes the effect. Its fundamental paradox lies in the fact that it works retroactively, articulating a temporal loop in which what is chronologically previous is posited as a retroactive effect of a chronologically later sequence. The imaginary of the future perfect is thus the opposite of linear completeness. It cannot be identified with any chronometer. It is based on a rupture, a break with the existing situation, opening up at the same time the possibility of new sequences precisely through this rupture, this discontinuity, this incision in relation to the existing situation. It is a time that opens a positive place of absence where a direct approach inevitably fails. It predicts a new sequence that cannot be substantiated a priori but, rather, “will have been substantiated.” It is a utopian temporality which, for structural reasons, can never be realized in the present.²

By crossing the boundary traced in the symbolic, by overcoming some point of impossibility, *futur antérieur* opens up a new possibility, an unmarked space that first needs to be explored. The new sequence it introduces is thus not simply deducible from the existing state. It cannot be expressed with the old parameters of the system, since it surpasses the immanence of the given situation. The possibilities of the new sequence thus cannot be simply assumed with the matrix that understands the future according to the model of a linear past. *Futur antérieur* implies a temporality that is not deducible from the homology of the past and future. It opens a sequence that is radically contingent, non-deducible from

a previous string of deductions. Its consistency can only become apparent retroactively through its inclusion in the unusual logic of always contingent consequences. It will become what it is only when unforeseeable effects become apparent.

Futur antérieur always opens a gap that escapes the register of knowledge of a given state. It points to the extimate, inherent decenterment of the symbolic. It opens a point of the impossible in a given situation, the place of absence in presence, but at the same time already also predicts a new beginning that requires overcoming that place. The prediction of a new sequence requires overcoming uncertainty and anxiety, because it radically breaks with the situational encyclopedia and has no support in the symbolic. It is therefore based on anxiety and is constituted by overcoming anxiety.³ The basic paradox of the prediction of a new series or sequence is in the a priori affirmation of a certainty that is not deducible from the foreseeability of structural relations. The anticipation of certainty is here a wager that explicitly does not have a precise grounding or guarantee in knowledge and also cannot be explained with the immediacy of the situation or the presence of positively determinable images.

The utopia and the anxiety that Boris Groys explores in his concept outline for the 8th Triennial of Contemporary Art U3⁴ are thus constitutive moments that must be thought together. In Stanley Kubrick's celebrated film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the mission to Jupiter goes smoothly, without a hitch, up to the turning point when the super-computer Hal makes a mistake that undermines the idea of his complete operative capability and infallibility. But just prior to dramatically switching off, while admitting to his fallibility and series of bad decisions, Hal declares his enthusiasm, his certainty about and trust in the mission. Hal's enthusiasm overcomes the immanence of the situation determined by dysfunction, anomaly, and the slip in regularity. It anticipates certainty, but excludes any positive presentation. This enthusiasm is entangled in a time loop: it signals a new possibility that has no base in knowledge and is not substantiated a priori, but at the same time relies on the fact that "it will have been" substantiated.

The imaginary of futur antérieur arises between anticipation and retroactive reading, between "not yet" and "always already." It marks a paradoxical relation that evades chronological time. It implies a split or break that introduces an essential non-homogeneity into time. It has no support in the system of foreseeable relations. It makes topical the relation between order and disorder that cannot be determined by some standard measure., Pictorial rules are themselves constantly in a state of becoming, they do not play the roles of cause or final reference, they are in reality only being composed, or, according to Hegel, "the examination is not only an examination of knowledge, but also of the criterion used in the process."⁵

.....

1 *Translator's note. The English equivalent of futur antérieur is the future perfect tense.*

2 Slavoj Žižek, *The Fragile Absolute, or, Why is the Christian legacy worth fighting for?* (London & New York: Verso, 2000), p. 31.

3 Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre X: L'angoisse* (Pariz: Seuil, 2004), pp. 204-205. In English: *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X, Anxiety, 1962-1963*. Translated by Cormac Gallagher from unedited French typescripts. Pp. 121-122. Available online at <http://www.lacanireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Seminar-X-Revised-by-Mary-Cherou-Lagreze.pdf>; accessed on 24 May 2016.

4 <http://www.mg-lj.si/si/dogodki/1122/javni-razpis-za-udelezbo-na-trienalu-sodobne-umetnosti-v-sloveniji-u3/>

5 G.W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, translated by J. B. Baillie (Blackmask Online, 2001), p. 32.

Staš Kleindienst Does the Cosmos Have a Center?

Does the cosmos have a center? In its most abstract form, the idea of the cosmos inevitably includes a sense of infinity, potentiality, and freedom: the cosmos as the boundless space beyond the horizon, the cosmos as the imagination of humanity's progress, the cosmos as a network of egalitarian social relations. But is it really so?

In my work, I focus on the network as an illusion, as a product of an ideology that sells the idea of freedom coupled with the inclusion of individuals in this network, which then becomes the exclusive field of their interaction. Or as Igor Zabel writes in his essay "Tišina stvari" (The Silence of Things): "The idea of interactivity as 'equality' between an individual and the network, i.e., the equality between the two sides of the interface, is fairly illusory. The network itself determines the limits of freedom and the nature of the game, and the apparently complete freedom of interfering in the network in reality constitutes the actualization and the functioning of the network."¹ Thus we could say that, hiding behind the illusion of a network, there is a circular configuration with a center that directs its trajectories outward and imposes conditions on all points, including the most peripheral ones. In this sense, the idea of the cosmos (or the idea of conquering the cosmos) relates more to appropriating this limitlessness, to colonization and privatization, which are the domain of the ruling class, than to the idea of a more just social order. The cosmos thus not only *does* have limits, it also has a central point of authority and a periphery dominated by the center. After all, science-fiction literature and cinema dealing with conquering space almost always have undertones of totalitarianism, control, slavery, etc. Often, their premise is the end of life on Earth and the (cleansing) moment of a new beginning after our civilization has conclusively ruined our planet, while the Noah's Arc of the future can only accommodate a small, select group of the privileged who've earned their ticket for a new life through their social connections and (financial and political) clout. This privileged class that gets a chance to create a new, more sterile society has its Other in the radiation-disfigured bodies of the masses, the rabble that pays the ultimate price for being social failures—along with the planet, they perish. What becomes apparent in this relation is not only a radical form of the binary social division in capitalism, but above all—amplified to its ultimate form—the relation between a state of emergency and the ensuing class division.

Naively, perhaps, we might see a similarity between the idea of the endless expanses of the cosmos and those of art—art as a space in which creativity finds its concrete forms that transcend their material boundaries and become part of the universe of cultural exchange. We could even say that the spectator's ritual of interacting with an artwork clouds the background of circumstances, the production conditions under which the work was made. Thus, like the case of the cosmos, the illusion of an open network obscures the strict hierarchical relations underlying the production, historicization, valorization, and, ultimately, the very formation of an artistic subject. Wide expanses are replaced by positions of power, institutions, juries, curators, collectors, all instrumental in works and artists even approaching this universalist illusion, let alone becoming a part of it. The infinity of the art system cosmos is thus reduced to minor random events and coincidences, chance encounters and acquaintances, the stamps left on an artist's CV by awards and prizes, and last but not least, in this cosmos, to an artist's practice being at least roughly compatible with the curator's idea.

.....

¹ Igor Zabel, "Tišina stvari", *Speculationes* (Ljubljana: Institutum Studiorum Humanitatis, 1997), p. 147.

Nina Koželj Flow Job

The Easter Island statues are our giant ancestors carved in stone and buried firmly into the substance of Mother Earth. All ancestors came from their ancestors, and they in turn from their ancestors, and so on, since the beginning of time. But on the threshold of time (or timelessness), stands ancestry itself.

The transparent plastic sculptures are the Origin of every flow and the Flow itself—the cause and effect. They are (almost) invisible but in front of the human mind they take an anthropomorphic form because in this way human observers can easily understand their existence on the wave of the never-ending breath, feel the Aeon and the incapability of grasping its limits. Beyond the expression of Chronos devouring his children, one simply has to laugh.

COSMIC = COMIC

Tanja Lažetić The Skies above Me

I take a photograph of the night sky every day, and often this is the last thing I do that day. I then cut the photograph into a circle and make some kind of a black hole. The outlines of clouds are visible on the photographs, but still, these are just various shades of black with fewer or more white dots if the sky is clear, or one large dot if the moon enters the frame. Yet the night is not nothing. I see the night sky as an image of the subconscious. Nighttime is the other, unknown and dark part of the day, and taking a nightly photograph of the sky is my ritual. At those times, only the sky is above me.

I took my first pictures of the night sky last year in Shanghai. There, the night sky is a thick crust, illuminated by a million lights, devoid of stars. Only when the wind was blowing did I not feel as if under a lid of some kind. Sometimes the wind would blow a chink in the clouds and then the twinkle of some far-away star would become visible, if only briefly. I began photographing the sky out of boredom, and because there were no stars, I documented the clouds. Their shapes were constantly changing, and no one moment resembled the one before it. That very short time spent observing the sky was a special instance of being-in-the-moment.

Early in the morning, when the dark gray sky lightened, a different star would shine in the sky above Shanghai. An old gentleman, one of the many kite-fliers on the riverbank, flew a kite in the shape of a red star every morning. Because the sky was cloudy the red star shone all the brighter, and sometimes for weeks on end the only star in the sky above Shanghai was a red star.

I took my first photograph of the night sky on 18 June 2015.

Gregor Mobius DNA—A Proto-Observer

What is life*? It might be impossible for a living creature to give an adequate answer to this question. Perhaps to posit an “objective” answer we would require a state or position that is neither alive nor dead, some kind of “third state” that is neither of these two, or a combination of both, from where it would be possible to observe and distinguish both living and dead entities. For me, as a living observer, this third state seems to be impossible to comprehend or define, because an observer has to be alive to be a subject of change, and in order to be able to observe.

Any living observer has faculties that allow it to interact with its environment (sense), to process and store information, and to act accordingly. It seems that most living observers do not perceive themselves as separate from the world around them. However there are some living observers that are indeed aware of this separation. They also understand that there is a part of the environment (world) that will never be experienced by the observer, that will remain unknown, and that there is a part of the observer that is separated from the environment, that is not a part of the world, which we could call “I”. It is this kind of observer that is in fact able to observe itself, or to be self-reflective. Any living observer has its beginning (birth) and its end (death), but only the self-reflective observer is aware of this.

What is essential to note in all this, however, is that any form of observation includes a process of change, in both the observer and in what is being observed. The observer changes itself and the world while observing it. The emergence of life from the stage of the earliest living molecule is at the same time the emergence of its environment. However, the self-awareness of an observer implies as well an awareness of the environment (world) that is not possible without memory.

Memory could be defined as a set of information and an algorithm in which this information is stored and retrieved. Since there is an order of storing information, there is a process of irreversibility that can be associated with acquiring memory, that is the opposite of entropy. It goes from a state of low organization (less information) to one of higher organization (more information). By remembering the initial state (low entropy), we may compare it with the end state (high entropy). And it is memory itself that allows us to make this distinction in the first place. The entire evolution of life could be interpreted as a process of acquiring memory. It has a direction of change, it is irreversible, and it moves from simpler toward more complex ways of organizing living organisms. It seems that the evolution of life could be interpreted as an anti-entropic but also irreversible process. Since an observer itself can be understood to be a reflection, a picture of its environment, the more complex living organism (observer) is, the more complex image of the world it encodes. The interpretation of the environment that was “impressed” on the earliest living molecule was a very simple one, most likely binary in its nature. It is reasonable to assume that those first sets of information were about some properties of the environment vital for the living molecule to maintain its integrity, in other words, to survive, such as distinctions between hot and cold or dark and light. In order to recognize these properties around itself this first life had to know what is hot and cold, meaning that this knowledge had to be incorporated, stored within its own molecular structure. However, there must have been a moment when for the first time a new combination within a living molecule took place that enabled it to distinguish hot from cold and thus increased its chances of survival. Because there is life today, it is also reasonable to assume that this rudimentary knowledge about the environment, this early picture of the world, acquired by the first life form was vital and accurate enough to be

passed through all subsequent stages of life until the present day. It could probably be found among the DNA strands of any living organism today. Understandably, most of the research on DNA has been focused primarily on the biological properties of a certain sequence or strand, or on the functional role it plays in a living organism. In addition to finding out what a DNA sequence does, it might be also interesting to find out if it possesses any form of meaning, and what this meaning might be. What kind of knowledge might be encoded in a DNA sequence and how might we go about identifying and interpreting it? To answer these questions, first of all, it would be necessary to have an adequate means to interpret DNA and RNA as some kind of language.

The visual method introduced in this book is intended to provide such a language. It is based on a specific representation of DNA/RNA sequences that are expressed visually with well-established formal relationships derived primarily from the visual properties of its constitutive notions. This method is based on five discrete values of the gray-scale while the sequences are organized in 2D blocks of 3x4 matrices. With these two different kinds of structure, one structure of values and another of positions, it is possible to generate images connected with a set of formal rules that could be understood as syntactical in nature. Furthermore, it is also possible to attach certain meanings to this form of representation that would constitute some kind of DNA semantics. Thus the five values on the gray scale are interpreted as five DNA/RNA bases, and their relationships are derived from the properties of the corresponding values. For example, all the base-pairs could be defined by a single rule: 50% value difference between the bases. It is also possible to attach some additional meanings to the values representing bases. Values black and white could be interpreted not only as U and T, but also as cold and hot, or dark and light, as well as large and small, or distant and close, while certain distributions of values within the 3x4 matrix could be recognized as highly organized states, and others as states of entropy.

Altogether, in addition to looking at DNA as a functional (biological) entity, it seems that it is possible to approach DNA as a specific living observer with a certain kind of knowledge impressed (stored) on it, as a set of information about its environment (world) that can be translated and interpreted through a language with its semantic expressed visually. This approach could enable a very different understanding of DNA, but also of ourselves as its more complex expression, and the strangely familiar world around us.

.....

* *What is Life* is the title of the famous book by Erwin Schrödinger published in 1944. Perhaps one descriptive and incomplete definition could be: Life is self-organized matter that maintains and improves its structural and functional properties through observation, growth and multiplication.

Marko and Marika Pogačnik Transforming Chaos into Cosmos and Vice Versa

1
The ancient Greek concept of *Cosmos* cannot be properly understood without its complementary part, *Chaos*. Chaos represents the primeval powers of Gaia, the all-embracing Earth consciousness. The powers of Chaos are Gaia's archetypal powers

that work beyond the limits of the manifested world to make the creation of the Earthly Universe as a tangible reality possible. Identifying Chaos with universal disorder is a human projection that works to humiliate Gaia as the Goddess of the Earthly Universe and to make her dependent on the hierarchy of masculine powers that identify themselves as “cosmic.”

2

Cosmos represents the universal matrix of creation. The purpose of the universal matrix of creation is to open diverse paths for all possible creative processes to take place in the universe with the aim of enriching its living abundance. The patterns of creation called “cosmic” pulsate throughout the universe to inspire creative processes. The cosmic matrix, updated at each moment by the angelic consciousness of the universe, represents the possibility for any creative process to develop to its full potential.

3

The powers of Chaos are known to human culture as “dragon powers.” Dragon powers in effect represent the mighty angels of the Earth capable of translating the creative ideas of Gaia into living, even tangible reality. Secondly, dragon powers know another phase when they appear in the form of atomic power. Atomic power safely enveloped in the structure of an atom represents the building unit of the manifested universe.

4

Human beings are not meant to be mere observers of the cosmic creative process. The human consciousness has the ability to attune to the creative ideas of Gaia and the inspirations of the cosmic creative matrix. Within the multidimensional human body all the creative tools are coded that enable a human being to become a co-creator in the permanent process of Cosmos transforming into Chaos, and Chaos transmitting its living powers towards Cosmos.

Šempas, 31 March 2016

Uroš Potočnik Nothing Is What It Seems... We Are in the Draft of the Century

Society is experiencing change on all levels. We are grappling with environmental and political problems/conflicts, usually related to natural resources. Issues that seemed resolved once and for all are again being questioned. Previously given human rights are now on their way out. Old values are under revision, recycled and adapted to the new circumstances. War = peace. Justice = the power of capital. Efficiency and cutting the cost of labor = modern-day slavery. Coexistence and helping one another = egoism.

Environmental problems, the negative impact of globalization and neoliberal capitalism, small islands of accumulated wealth – these have brought humanity up against a new challenge: How can 8 billion future people coexist on this planet and what should the new world social order be?

Humans are highly adaptable creatures. Good at blending in, quick to recognize the needs of other fellow humans, and constantly adapting (changing their colors) to achieve personal or political goals. They know when to step back and when to take a stand against impending

danger. Fear has always been a useful weapon of political manipulation to agitate the populace. Like fear of the unknown, fear of a strange color and culture. Fear always divides a nation, never unites it. Refugees and migrants soon run up against a wall of consumerism and the disapproval of the other culture. Nationally protected autochthonous food symbolically already enjoys more rights than does the exploited working class.

The media's work of disseminating information never stops. It is difficult to bring into focus. There are constant corrections, diversions that obstruct the view of and focus on the real situation or core problem. Mud-slinging is the most frequent form of public political face-offs in the media, serving as excellent smokescreens for the listeners or spectators. Nothing is what it seems. Paradisiacal islands are long gone. Only alluring photographs in brochures remain... In the Maldives, islands of paradise, neat little anti-erosion walls are being constructed from non-autochthonous volcanic rock on the hot sand... We are in the draft of the century.

3 April 2016

Marjetica Potrč Survival Strategies and Community Building in Post-Capitalism

In the spring of 2006, I spent an extended time in the Brazilian state of Acre, a remote area of Amazonia known for radical social practices and policies. Six months later, the São Paulo Biennial organised a seminar about Acre in São Paulo. The talks revolved around the social policies the Acre state government had developed in co-ordination with local communities, most famously the creation of “extraction reserves”—territories managed and controlled by the communities who live in the forest. Over past fifteen years, approximately half of the state's land has been distributed to these communities, resulting in a fragmentation, or territorialisation, of state territory. The logic for creating these self-managed territories was simple: *If people can survive in the forest, then the forest will also survive*. In Acre, the period of profit-driven capitalistic over-exploitation of the forest is seen as an era that has come to an end.

During the seminar, some people wondered why we should even be talking about Acre in a major metropolis like São Paulo. What does a sophisticated urban society have to learn from a remote, sparsely populated region in Amazonia? Surely, it should be the other way around. Then the geographer José Carlos Meirelles made a surprising statement: the communities in the forest want to maintain their distance from the outside world. “They have their rights to the land as well as the right to remain isolated, carrying on with their culture independently of any contact with ours.”¹ The forest communities view their relative isolation as something positive—they want to develop their societies, but at their own pace; they want to connect with others, but on their own terms. But first they want to preserve and protect not only their land, but their cultural identity as well.

This statement from a man who is extremely familiar with life in the rainforest described the Acreans' self-segregation from the larger, globalised society as a positive choice. A key difference between this decision and the model of the gated community, in which people voluntarily segregate themselves in order to live with “people like us”, is the Acreans' bottom-up community building. In the kind of gated community found in North America and Europe, individuals often have little chance to participate in the building of community. An extreme case are the “stand-alone cities” near Atlanta,

Georgia, in the United States, which outsource their security needs to contractors; the moment a community is unable to pay for their services, the contractor stops providing security.² The Acrean community, by contrast, relies on socially conscious individuals and participatory democracy. Theirs is a different understanding of subjectivity. In Acre, the socially conscious individual views existence as, essentially, co-existence. “Being” means “being with”, and “I” does not take precedence over “we”.³ An example of this understanding can be seen in the forest communities’ communal cultivation of land. The Acreans are quick to point out that this practice is not the result of political ideology: “It is not about communism or capitalism; it is simply how things work best locally.”⁴

Sustainability in the twenty-first century is based on local solutions—which usually embrace some pre-modern method—and local practices. Even in the European Union, localisation has become an important recent trend: as the EU expands, it is reconfiguring itself in terms of regions and localities. Examples of empowered localities close to home can be seen in recent programmes in the city of Lille, in France,⁵ and in the growing Transition Towns movement in Ireland and the United Kingdom.⁶ Such endeavours focus on building small-scale resilient communities (Lille envisions a neighbourhood as sustainable territory) that practice a sustainable way of life as they tackle such critical challenges as high oil prices and global warming (the impetus behind the Transition Towns movement). Culture is one of the essential pillars of durable sustainability (others are the environment, economy and society). Culture and small-scale “sustainable territories”—not unlike the Acrean experience—provide the foundation for living on the edge of catastrophe: communities are disillusioned with the globalised profit-driven capitalism and face serious questions about how to survive in the unsettling era that is approaching. Are we looking at a new kind of geopolitical sustainability? Most important in this radical reinvention of communities is a “change of culture”, i.e. changes in the way we do things. Sustainability is political, if we understand politics as the process by which groups of people make decisions. A forest community in Acre, the close-knit village-like community of a Lille neighbourhood, and the Transition Town of Totnes in Devon, England, are all examples of a democracy built from below, in which sustainability is understood as a form of social cohesion. As Catherine Cullen, Lille’s deputy mayor for culture, told me: “Rebuilding a city is to rebuild how we live together.”⁷

The text was first published in *VOLUME 18: After Zero* (Amsterdam) (Winter 2008): pp. 100–111, www.volumeproject.org.

.....

1 José Carlos Meirelles, “Isolated Indians and the Right to Land”, talk delivered 11 November 2006 at the seminar “Acre”, organised by José Roca at the 27th São Paulo Biennial. Meirelles, an expert on the indigenous peoples of Amazonia, works with the Fundo Nacional do Índio (the National Foundation for the Indian, or Funai). Since 1988, he has resided in Acre, near the headwaters of the Rio Envira.

2 Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (London: Penguin, 2007); see especially the chapter “Disaster Apartheid: A World of Green Zones and Red Zones”, pp. 406–422.

3 See Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000).

4 This statement was made by Marcos Vinicius Neves, a historian and the chairman of the Garibaldi Brasil Foundation in Rio Branco, Acre, in my video *Florestania: A New Citizenship* (2006).

5 Lille has, for example, adopted the programme Agenda 21 for Culture (http://www.agenda21culture.net/index_en.htm).

6 See the movement’s website, <http://www.transitiontowns.org>.

7 From an interview in September 2008.

Lina Rica & Boštjan Čadež Tekstomlat

Tekstomlat is a real-time generated animation programmed to randomly pick parts of the given text and render them into a collaged body of words.

...information must explain how these thinking raises god oh remember sources as being by the one who stayed on one is to has already been driving it understanding these were moving away from before the universe help control messages the conflict the tradition contain a big bang into battle apparently nearer then there is theorem required that which it is possible relativity the difference a galaxy is strongest gravitational effects of high seas by bishop a visible stars appear surprising still was little while but a big bang the orbits of these clusters by its general relativity is to be great to have seem to suggest intense experience unlike beauty expects the artworks had to be it could mean from which it present in the star and thereby does we get that hubble published arc is directors mistrust hardness avarice and exist then this complete the level edge orbits around the pleasure from having missing from a one could not use and in standard binary code oppressed turns into the sun in our not awakened 21st century to start contracting even the size speed of light longitude and a led experiment at the case example and the caring however it is kind of the second thus of the particles can be ideas of space promise is below the speed that which is galaxy is red shift the world waited at the red immortality of the soul cosmic events that other bodies things it exists in real difference between any universe meant the theory of relativity status and tactical extraterritoriality for a mission shorter wavelengths that obey is a discovery of the random but is waves we receive is in the depths when they suddenly discovered hyper secure bunker of their own world when humanity we see it however fence borders but of a sofa of space-time affects the fire towards the light of an event...

Sašo Sedlaček Sky in Ruins (di sotto in sù)

Sky in Ruins is an illusionistic ceiling video projection that alludes to the tradition of Renaissance ceiling painting and its illusionistic depictions of limitless space with an architectural vanishing point on the ceiling. The vanishing point was vertically directly above, the gaze was directed *di sotto in sù*, "from below, upward," to the illusory open skies.

The vanishing point in the *Sky in Ruins* project is in the blackness of the orbits along which satellites circle the Earth. The projection is a window into the nearby cosmos, where there is far more space trash than satellites. It is a ceiling illusion that provides a dystopian view of space in our vicinity. A series of close-ups of collisions between satellites and space trash is projected onto the space dumping ground opening up above us.

The 3-D animation is a homemade visual illusion. It is made with Blender open source software, with realistically fashioned models of satellites, and is accompanied by recordings of actual space sounds. The main purpose of the work, however, is not so much to portray a real situation in nearby space as it is to point out that the universe, despite its vastness, is not so unlimited that we could go on simply moving our bad habits from Earth out into space.

Ali Van Body Temperature

It is spacetimeflesh, a paleolithic inquiry, a moon of breath, a film of water, a seventh rain leaping thirds, stillatim. It takes its pulse into Bataille's blush and finds within his fane an extrusion of illocution for optic eat shared, artesian fold warmed, vauclusian flow released - to transpose eau.

Anton Vidokle Factories of Resurrection: Interview with Anton Vidokle

Arseny Zhilyaev

Arseny Zhilyaev: Your recent films, which deal with the problematic of Russian cosmism, may come across as strange or even exotic. I know that your initial encounter with this topic was rather unusual. How did you start to work with this subject?

Anton Vidokle: About ten years ago Boris Groys told me about a very strange movement in Russia around the time of the Revolution. His description of it sounded so macabre and vampiric that I thought he had invented it. The story was too good to be real: the resurrection of the dead on spaceships, blood transfusions to suspend aging, and so on. It sounded like a science fiction novel. He said he had published a book on this in Germany, but unfortunately I do not speak German, so I did not pursue it. Then a few years ago I was doing an interview with Ilya Kabakov when he started talking about the same thing. I suddenly realized that it was not just Groys's invention, so I looked it up.

What I found was Fedorov's book *The Common Task*, which was so intensely beautiful that it hooked me immediately. Also useful was *The Russian Cosmists: The Esoteric Futurism of Nikolai Fedorov and His Followers*, a history by George Young, who has been researching this topic since the late Seventies. I slowly discovered that this is actually a very massive layer of Russian and Soviet culture that I knew nothing about, and which seemed to explain certain inexplicable things about the motives and thoughts of the avant-garde, which has always interested me.

AZ: Can you tell me more about the origins of your film *The Communist Revolution Was Caused By The Sun*? Where did the idea come from? How did you develop the work? You chose to shoot the film in Karaganda, Kazakhstan, a rather unusual location. The landscape, with its Soviet industrial architecture and Muslim cemeteries, looks very weird even to Russians.

AV: At first, my plan was to make one feature-length film about cosmism. But as I started doing research, then filming and editing material, I realized that a single feature film would be impossible: the topic is just too vast, because there are so many different dimensions to this movement, from art to literature, poetry, theater, film, architecture, design, science and technology, medicine, philosophy, politics, social organization, and so forth.

So I decided to make a series of shorter films, about half an hour each. The first film, *This Is Cosmos*, dealt with the general ethos of cosmism: a collage of ideas from the movement's diverse protagonists. In a sense it's a kind of an introduction, with subsequent films addressing specific manifestations and ideas in depth.

The second film, *The Communist Revolution Was Caused By The Sun*, is based on the work and ideas of Alexander Chizhevsky, a biophysicist who was exiled to Karaganda, which was

a city populated primarily by political prisoners who were released from camps and prisons, but who were not allowed to return to Moscow or other central cities.

Kazakhstan was the site of a very large network of labor camps known as *Karlag*, similar to the better-known *Gulag*. It was also the key site of the Soviet space program, with most of the rockets launching from Baikonur and landing in the steppe surrounding Karaganda. Sort of like the American city of Houston, in Texas, the city was both an enormous prison and one of the first spaceports. Architecturally, it is dominated by vast coal mines, most of which are now shut down, as well as enormous cemeteries which evolved a very particular architectural style that I have not seen elsewhere: they look like miniature cities full of manifold mausoleum structures quoting various Islamic traditional styles, albeit all made from cheap, Soviet-era materials. It's a very unusual place.

AZ: Did you ever come across Chizhevsky's ionizer lamps when you were growing up in Moscow? I seem to remember that even in the Nineties, hospitals and schools always had them installed. These days they are not produced in their classical, Soviet version, though there are many other commercial types of ionizers available. However, I heard that they do not seem to have the therapeutic effect that the device designed by Chizhevsky was supposed to have. The device in the film is probably one of the few authentic ones that exist. What will happen to it? Will it be used for treatment?

AV: I have some vague memories of something like these ionizer lamps. I was sickly as a child and my mother used to try various remedies to improve my health, for example, *mumiyo*, which is a black tar-like substance from Altai, which apparently is petrified honey. You drink it with hot milk. Its tastes disgusting, but it's supposed to cure all sorts of ailments. From that time, I also remember something about the benefits of negatively charged ions of oxygen. But it's a very vague memory: I'm not really sure if I ever actually saw these devices.

Ionizer lamps were very popular in the Seventies and later. Many types have been produced: from things that look like Constructivist sculptures to devices disguised as painted porcelain vases or artificial palm trees, to blend better with the décor of your home. Most of these do not work, because they are not made according to Chizhevsky's original designs. Basically, it's a fairly simple device that creates an electric field, which changes the charge of particles in the air from positive to negative. It also cleans the air. This, in turn, helps the circulation of blood, which is supposed to produce rejuvenating effects in humans and animals. In nature, this happens on mountaintops, by the sea, and in forests. This phenomenon is related to the effect of solar particles on the ionosphere of our planet. Chizhevsky basically created a device that would reproduce this process indoors.

Ionizers are rather common these days. Many Japanese air conditioners include an ionization function, but the type Chizhevsky invented is hard to find. So for the film we had to build one ourselves. By incredible luck or coincidence we actually found the only industrial manufacturer who has worked with these devices, in Karaganda. It's a small experimental factory, which developed original designs and modified them to be used as air purification machines for factory chimneys. Apparently, this works to remove nearly all the carbon from polluted air and to release pure oxygen into the atmosphere.

The owner of the company is hoping that these devices will be adopted by all carbon-producing factories on the planet, because they are very economical and consume hardly any energy. According to him, this would drastically reduce the amount of carbon in the atmosphere and return Earth to the climate conditions that existed before the effects of human activity. As a result, he thinks that the climate will improve and that plants that have been extinct for many millennia will return, and Earth will become the Garden of Eden again: people will not need clothing anymore and we will all walk around naked, prehistoric plants and trees will grow plentiful fruit and we will not have to work for food, and so forth. So he is

lobbying the office of the president of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev, to include this device in the World Fair that will take place in the capital city, Astana, next year.

He was excited we were making a film about Chizhevsky and built a giant version of this lamp, which we then installed and tested at a local cemetery. After filming we donated it to the local museum of science and technology. They wanted it as a kind of an alternative monument to Chizhevsky: a functional monument. Hopefully it has been reinstalled there by now.

AZ: In the first two films in this trilogy you use elements associated with psychotherapy. You speak of the effect of color on the human body, and use strategies of hypnosis. This emphasis on the utilitarian aspect of art, simultaneously sincere and critical, tests the limits of our belief in the transformative power of art. At the same time, I feel as though you genuinely prefer utility over aesthesis or poesis. Most often, utility in art brings to mind certain socially engaged practices, which refer to politics or relational aesthetics in one way or another. It seems to me that you are trying to approach this on an entirely different level: through a direct, material influence—material determinism. The notion of the Communist Revolution—a complex social phenomenon—as an event that could have been produced by the purely material, physical influence of the sun dovetails with this thinking. Tell me about your relationship to utility in art and to materialism in the context of your projects.

AV: Utility in art is something that probably needs to be described carefully right now: it seems to me that there is a tendency these days to put a lot of emphasis on the “usefulness” of some types of artistic projects. It still remains to be seen if these works are really useful or are merely an expression of insecurity about the elusive nature and value of art, or of a reluctance on the part of some public institutions to fund activities that do not appear to have immediate and direct benefits for their constituencies, that are difficult to understand or appreciate. What I have been observing is that over the past few years, cuts in cultural funding are slowly forcing art organizations and some artists to adopt a certain stance that makes it easier to rationalize or justify their activities to government officials, sponsors, patrons, and politicians, and utility or usefulness are very instrumental terms here. While I do not believe that art should or could be completely autonomous from society, I do find this tendency simplistic.

With my films I want to come a little bit closer to the ethos behind cosmism, which is basically the desire to contribute directly and literally to the impossibly difficult project of immortality and resurrection for all, by any means possible, including art. It’s interesting that many cosmists saw medicine as a field where the project of immortality, in the sense of the prolongation of life, could be most immediately deployed. It’s not an accident that someone like Chizhevsky, who was really a physicist and not a physician, did most of his research in areas that could immediately improve human health, cure ailments, and in this way postpone death. Alexander Bogdanov was also a doctor—a psychiatrist, by education—and one of his most interesting projects was research into blood transfusion, through which he hoped to slow down aging and delay death.

So when I was editing the first film, it occurred to me that I did not want to make a mere documentary about the history of cosmism, and that in order to transmit its ideas more accurately, I needed to somehow express its central desire, which is simply to prolong life. Essentially, film is light, color, and sound, and all of these means can produce a therapeutic effect on the human organism. We all know about light therapy for children and people who live in places lacking in sunlight. Color therapy has been practiced since the time of the ancient Egyptians. Sound also appears to have various medical uses. So basically the structural elements that make up a film can be also used for preventative or other types of treatment.

In the first film in the series, I used red screens because of a red light treatment system developed by NASA to speed up the healing of skin wounds. They discovered this

accidentally, while looking for a way to heal cuts and abrasions in conditions of zero gravity, where the body heals very slowly—they found that red LED light, of a certain frequency, accelerates healing. At the same time, video projectors these days often use an LED light source, and the usage of HD LED screens is becoming more affordable and common each year. So I hope that in the near future, when this film is screened on an LED screen at some museum, it can be calibrated to also produce prophylactic and therapeutic effect on the viewer. Even if you don't like the film, it can have a positive effect on your body, on your cells and organs.

Similarly, the second film uses elements of clinical hypnosis that are commonly employed to break addictions. I try to use a hypnosis script at the beginning and the end of the film to break the addiction to mortality—the death drive. In the next film I plan to use a sound technique that has been used clinically to alter memory, which appears to be one of the reasons for drug and alcohol addictions and other self-destructive behavior. This is not to say that the main value of my work is medical—this would be charlatanism. But I use these techniques to express the desire implicit in cosmism to rejuvenate, cure, heal, improve health, delay death for as long as possible and by any means possible.

AZ: In your films there are many references to works by members of the Moscow conceptual school. In one way or another Ilya Kabakov, Boris Groys, and Andrei Monastyrski with Collective Actions Group—they are all present in these films. Can you tell me more about your relationship to this tradition? Do you think of yourself as belonging to it artistically?

AV: Well, this project was largely started through a conversation with Kabakov. However, Ilya has a very negative relationship to cosmism; for him it's as "evil" as communism, which he despises. Basically, his take on it is that it reduces humanity to a speck in the vastness of the cosmos, and in this way human existence becomes very marginal. He illustrates this idea very literally in some of his paintings, where tiny human figures form a kind of a thin border around the edges of the canvas, while the center is filled with a giant white void. I love these paintings, although I suspect that he misreads cosmism entirely. It seems to me that Ilya is very much a humanist, and while humanism never totally leaves the project of cosmism, it is a very hybrid version of humanism, which probably makes Ilya uncomfortable.

Andrei Monastyrski is a very different figure. When I started working on this project, I asked one of the researchers who was helping me gather material, a young artist named Anastasia Ryabova, to ask Andrei about Fedorov and cosmism. At the time, he said that it had nothing to do with his work. But just a couple of months ago, I spoke with him again and this time around he told me that he was actually reading Fedorov in the late Seventies, and that some of the ideas did influence him.

I refer to both Ilya's and Andrei's work in the first film, and will actually restage a version of one of Monastyrski's actions from 1979 in the next film in the series, with his consent. I admire these artists, but I really do not think that I belong to the Moscow conceptual tradition in any way. Most of it is rather hermetic and based on post-structuralism, the analysis of language and systems, and so forth. I think I come from something else artistically, although I am not exactly sure what that is.

AZ: You may have heard that during the past couple of years there has been quite a public discussion of cosmism in Russia. This started when the entire editorial team of an independent political web journal, *Russian Planet*, was fired, having been accused rather facetiously of being "weak cosmists." Subsequently, the label "weak cosmist" went viral, and is now usually used as a derogatory term. I have heard numerous sarcastic remarks about cosmism, mainly from the liberal intelligentsia, regarding the Soviet space program as well as the philosophy of Nikolai Fedorov and his followers. For them, cosmism is synonymous

with obscurantism and charlatanism. On the other hand, there is clearly a renewed interest in the cosmos as evidenced both by statements from the Russian government and by Russian culture at large. For example, the most successful Russian cartoon of the last few years, which has been nominated for an Oscar this year, is called *We Can't Live Without Cosmos*. I guess this is not only a Russian phenomenon, as the success of movies like *Interstellar* suggests. I am curious about how your projects on the cosmos and Russian cosmism are perceived in a more international context.

AV: I have not encountered anything particularly dismissive or hostile yet. Just perhaps a bit of disbelief, like: this story is too strange to be true.

Immortality and resurrection are very ancient topics and have always provoked controversy. It seems that it's very ingrained in almost all cultures that the desire for immortality is a sin, a transgression against nature, god, the essence of humanity, and so forth. So people are often ambivalent about this. And the cosmos is also something that most people view with a bit of fear. Just think of all the popular movies about something horrible coming from outer space to destroy Earth and humanity: all sorts of meteorites, monsters, aliens, and so forth. Furthermore, there is a certain degree of suspicion of things that are Russian. In Europe and America, where I spend most of my time, leftists dislike Russia because they think it ruined the possibility of communism, while people on the Right suspect that all things Russian are still secretly Communist. There isn't really all that much sympathy from either ideological camp, and the current political situation in the world does not help this.

But I do feel that many people respond to the kind of poetry and wild imaginative power that permeates Fedorov's ideas and cosmism in general. So there is quite a bit of curiosity.

AZ: Your films about cosmism make me think of Situationist experiments and the French New Wave. Firstly, this is because of the collage-like structure of the content of your films, and the emphasis you put on research. It's also because of your rejection of mimetic acting, your use of estrangement in the Brechtian sense and the direct address to the audience. And finally, it's because of the way you combine nearly abstract images (for example, landscapes shot from a great height) with a rather complex narrative about theoretical and scientific questions. On the other hand, having watched Russian television in the Eighties and Nineties, as well as Soviet science fiction films, I can't avoid mentioning works by Pavel Klushantsev in the context of your films. Klushantsev was one of the first directors to make films about the exploration of space. Many people think that his film *Path to the Stars* influenced Stanley Kubrick and George Lucas. Another one of his films, *The Stormy Planet*, went on to become an international hit under different titles—*The Planet of Prehistoric Women* and *Voyage to the Prehistoric Planet*—and without mention of its original filmmaker. Apparently, Klushantsev was the first director to use special effects in cinema, and some of the techniques he invented are still used in contemporary cinema, in a more technologically advanced way. Unfortunately, as was often the case in the USSR, his international success backfired and he was banned from making feature films; he was only allowed to make educational documentaries. But he went on to make more than one hundred film essays about the cosmos and various scientific problems, which, despite the ban, still feel more artistic than educational or documentary. I feel there is a similarity between your films and these documentary films by Klushantsev. Can you tell me more about who you feel affinity with in terms of the history of cinema? Who did you learn from?

AV: I think the films I make accidentally fall into the genre that used to be called "scientific-popular films," something unique to the Soviet film industry, which does not quite have a parallel in American or European cinema. These films were a bit different from the sci-fi

genre, which was really embraced and highly developed in the USSR. Similar to what you say about Klushantsev, these scientific/educational films for mass audiences were a kind of a refuge for certain filmmakers who could not get permission or support to develop their ideas within the feature film studios, like Mosfilm or Lenfilm, but were able to work at special studios set up for the production of this type of educational material. Perhaps because this was perceived as a lesser genre, it was not subject to the same kind of scrutiny from the censors as feature films. So certain filmmakers, like Sobolev for example, were able to make wildly experimental, expressionistic essay films, which would have never been allowed otherwise.

To be honest, I actually do not really remember seeing them when I was growing up in the Soviet Union, and I only discovered them recently because certain colleagues said that they have similarities to my work. So I looked them up. None of them are really “great” films in the sense of the history of cinema, and they do not compare to Pasolini or Godard or Tarkovsky, but they are remarkably imaginative and really interesting to watch. What is particularly interesting for me is that these films do not fall within the documentary or journalistic genre, while at the same time they are not fiction. They are a little bit of both. A lot of times, these films address a theoretical or philosophical topic that is difficult to reduce to the kind of story one needs for a narrative film, yet they are narrative and communicate very interesting, complex, abstract ideas. Usually, they are not feature length, but short—twenty to thirty minutes. In this sense, the format of these films is actually very suitable for the kind of films that work well within art exhibitions.

AZ: One last question about the future. If I understand correctly, you are planning to shoot the next film in this series in Moscow, and it will be about museums. Is that true?

AV: Yes, the next film will be shot in Moscow, at the Museum of the Revolution, the Museum of Zoology, and the modern collection of the Tretyakov Gallery. The film will be called *Immortality and Resurrection For All*, and it is based on passages from Fedorov’s essay about museums. For Fedorov, the museum is a key institution in society, unique insofar as it’s the only place that does not produce progress (which for him implies an erasure of the past), but rather cares for the past. He felt that museums needed to be radicalized such that they would not merely collect and preserve artifacts and images, but also preserve and recover life itself—resurrect the past. In this sense, museums should become factories of resurrection.

Yaji Garden Art Under the Sky

Curators: Chang Tsong-Zung and Gao Shiming

The ‘*yaji garden*’ is a physical embodiment of the traditional Chinese mode of art connoisseurship. Meaning literally an ‘elegant gathering’, it also has the implications of a ‘literati gathering’. Traditionally, the *yaji* is a communion of artistic friends and associates, who meet to enjoy art and performances in private gardens attached to private residences. The gardens typically contain artificial mountains and brooks, created in the spirit of Chinese landscape painting. Ideally, one would prefer to build a garden around an actual idyllic site in nature, instead of constructing artificial rockery.

The origin of *yaji* is ancient, but the concept and practice have had a continuous history until the present day, and even in modern times it is practised within Chinese culture, albeit in slightly new modes. In general, *yaji* may justifiably be identified as the archetypal

'exhibition practice' of pre-modern China. The most celebrated *yaji* event was probably the gathering at the Orchid Pavilion in year 353 AD, at which Wang Xizhi (canonised in the seventh century as the Sage of Calligraphy by Tang-dynasty Emperor Taizong) wrote the essay "Preface to the Anthology of Orchid Pavilion". This piece of calligraphy by Wang Xizhi remains the paradigmatic copy model for every serious student of calligraphy.

For a modern audience unfamiliar with the tradition, it is important to examine the questions of what precisely happens during the 'literati gathering' and what are its implications for the experience of art? Does literati connoisseurship as exemplified in the *yaji* practice have different expectations from both the encounter with art and the artworks themselves, than does the modern museum?

There are two components that constitute the '*Yaji Garden*' experience: the *yaji* activity and the site of the garden; if we translate this experience to the modern museum, these components would correspond to the visitor's experience and the architectural edifice with its exhibition display. Here one sees a difference in emphasis: the success of a *yaji* experience is contingent on the gathering, and the success of the event depends as much on the art being displayed as it relies on the dynamics generated by the participants. For the museum the strength is its static display, while the occasional events and 'happenings' that appear within and outside its domain are collected as ephemeral artworks demonstrating various 'processes'. Compared to the *yaji*'s emphasis on participants' experience, the modern museum's identity clearly resembles an edifice of display.

Seen in the light of the modern museum, the salient feature of the *Yaji garden* stands apart as an apparatus for engendering the 'aesthetic moment'. The Chinese word for such a moment of 'inspiration' is *xing* (pronounced 'shing') or *qi xing* (pronounced 'chi shing'), and *qi xing* means to be 'inspired' to creativity. In Confucius' anthology, the *Book of Poetry*, *xing*, or inspiration, is one of three principle modes of writing poetry. Typically, a *yaji* gathering starts with an invitation from a 'host' who provides a pretext for the event, which may be a seasonal holiday, appreciation of a seasonal flower, sharing of new (or newly acquired) paintings, or antiques. The 'guests' would be expected to share their art, and take part in the connoisseurship by 'artistic' responses such as composing poetry and commentary, or simply engaging in conversation.

The *yaji* event takes place in a garden and its attached residence, usually accompanied by music and other cultivated activities like the appreciation of incense, seasonal flowers and teas. In such an ambient surrounding participants are expected to be alert to the artistic experience and form an immediate engagement. This is very different from the emphasis of the modern museum on passive visuality. *Yaji* is a tactile, immersive experience: the Chinese traditional painting format of hanging and rolled scrolls, which requires handling by the viewer, is indicative of the spirit of physical, tactile engagement. The demand on both 'host' and 'guest' to articulate their aesthetic response dispels the passive spectator, and conspires instead to bring out the 'aesthetic moment'.

Major historical *yaji* gatherings are remembered by anthologies of poetry and essays that result from the events, which arguably form a loose record of China's 'history of exhibition' before the age of exhibition (in the modern sense) arrived in China in the first decade of the 20th century. Unlike salons and cultural gatherings in the West, which have remained at the periphery of the western paradigm of museum exhibition, the *yaji* always formed the recognised locus of connoisseurship and display of 'fine art', meaning 'literati art' in China. One major reason for this is due to the continuity of its format, which has

established a quasi-institutional status for itself. Another reason is its ties to a specific type of site, the *yaji garden*. A legitimate art institutional site means the power to endorse and legitimise 'art' as such, which is the function served by the *yaji garden*. However, unlike modern institutions, the *yaji garden* has no official status and only satisfies a very loose functional definition. Not only is the garden at most times a private space for pleasure, literati gatherings do not actually guarantee recognition of artworks apart from the private circulation that might or might not build their public reputation. In what ways, then, is the *yaji garden* 'institutional' in a way that may compare with the white cube museum?

The modern museum is a social institution created to serve the modern 'public', a creature of the civic urban world endowed with its own social regime and benefits. A 'citizen', as a member of the 'public', is entitled by 'right' to modern institutions of social services, and this 'right' is exactly the term of democracy not granted the pre-modern Chinese. However, in the modern museum system, the 'public' in general does not share in the legitimation of artworks; the right of legitimation is reserved for the art 'professionals'. By contrast, the *yaji* gathering is a private event, and the 'audience' is invited guests. The relation between the organiser and participants is 'host' and 'guest'. Historically the artistic authority of *yaji* gatherings relied on the reputation of the participants, much like the consensus of today's 'art circle' and, like the modern 'art circle' of 'cultural intellectuals', they shared a common knowledge base and comparable social status as 'literati'. What is different here is the nature (politically and culturally) of the literati. Whatever their occupation or social circumstance, the literati were of the same 'class' (here referring to those sharing a similar worldview) of the learned that constituted the cultural critical sector as well as those wielding power in office. In China's pre-modern days, up to the first decade of the 20th century, artistically minded scholar-officials would host *yaji* parties, and a common villager would expect his district governor capable of poetry as part of his claim to office. In the pre-modern *yaji garden*, through the constituency of its members, art and politics met on the ground of aesthetics. Although the *yaji garden* is not an official institution, within its walls artworks are legitimated by reputable participants. Significantly, in terms of art, the *yaji garden*'s legitimacy as 'institution' is more by right of customary practice than right of law. Events hosted in the *yaji garden* might be called 'institutionalised happenings', wherein artworks are provoked to 'perform' their function as 'art' through evoking aesthetic responses in the form of individual articulation.

The site of the *yaji* gathering, the garden, is constructed to be conducive to the experience of art, suitable for 'teasing out' the 'aesthetic moment'. What this implies is: not only should the garden embody the terms of aesthetics of Chinese fine art, it is also designed as a site for opening up the artistic imagination. The traditional term for aesthetic imagination is *yijing*, meaning the 'intentional realm', or 'aesthetic realm'. As a secluded site removed from interference of the mundane world, the garden's 'realm of aesthetics' liberates the mind to partake in the livingness of 'nature' and the dynamics of the cosmos. The garden is built to evoke an idyllic natural site, the same principle used in landscape painting. In an ideal situation, the garden should be a catalyst for linking with the cosmos.

One might loosely claim that the aim of literati art represents a human pursuit of the cosmic realm through connecting with nature and great artworks of the past and present. Art is experienced in the garden with the garden as witness and reminder that livingness means the pleasure of communion with creatures and things of the world. As a famous twelfth-century century poem says, "birds on the branches are my friends/petals drifting on the pond make fine literature". The *yaji garden* is a site for art that aspires to communion with nature among friends who share this appreciation. The culture of interactive

connoisseurship is reflected in the attitude of treatment of antiquities: old masterworks are not simply venerated as objects of the past, but brought 'up to date' through the tradition of continuous commentaries and poetry that are attached as addendum to the original artwork. This is the reason for the numerous collectors' seals on old Chinese master paintings and calligraphy. By contrast with the modern museum, which hastens to historicise (or museum-ise) artworks, the literati connoisseur's practice of incorporating fresh artistic responses into old artworks demonstrates a resistance against 'museum-isation'. The attitude is that a relevant artwork should be a living project.

Implicit in the *yaji garden*'s practice is a view of art fundamentally different from the traditional European aesthetics of 're-presentation'. *Yijing* (intentional/aesthetic realm) implies a pursuit that in principle takes into account subjective participation; self-discovery is integral to unveiling the mystery of the world. For the audience, not only does it confront the viewer with his own experience, it engages all the senses. The *yaji garden* is an immersive experience designed to provide a congenial condition to evoke the intended *yijing*. *Yijing* takes its strength from powers greater than the isolated artwork, and returns art to the cosmic ('nature') context from which it arose.

To enjoy art under the sky is the pleasure of the *yaji garden*. Traditional painting and calligraphy are in formats designed for the library rather than the wall, mostly mounted as horizontal or vertical rolled scrolls or book albums, made for handling by the viewer. The format presumes fine art connoisseurship to be a personal reflective process referencing the experience of literature; it is symptomatic that Chinese terminology for art appreciation uses terms such as 'reading', 'playing' or 'enjoying' (*du, wan, shang*). To bring this art into the garden is to share personal experience under congenial circumstances, like bringing a good book into the park to meet friends. Time of day and seasonal elements make the experience particular; in contrast to the religiosity of a modern museum, where the halo of spotlight (intimating 'eternity') both fixes the artwork as an icon of worship, and transfixes the respectful viewer, light in the *yaji garden* is dependent on the sky. The natural condition and delight of the garden not only direct the viewer to art but also to the cultural memory of transcendent Heaven and spirituality associated with mountains. Mountain as a realm of the immortals (in written form the Chinese word for 'immortal' is a composite of the characters for 'mountain' and 'person') is the metaphor for garden rockery and also for landscape art. Viewing a landscape painting within the garden's landscape is not the equivalent of looking at a portrait in the company of the person; the point here is not to represent or idealise, but to seek a way to engage and enter the mystery of nature.

As pointed out by Hong Kong scholar Chiu Kwong-chiu (in conversation), the liberal use of the metaphor of *jie* ('borrowing', 'lending the strength of', 'making an excuse of') in the literature of art suggests the fleeting pleasure of 'borrowing' from powers beyond (which includes exemplary works of early masters). Perhaps it is because to access the 'aesthetic realm' (in order to go beyond the mundane) an artist/connoisseur requires the help of powers beyond one's ken, and illicit 'borrowings' such as the garden designer's 'borrowing sceneries from beyond the walls' (*jie jing*) and the artist's 'borrowing the moon's reflection in the pond' prompt him to return to the 'scene of the crime'. In this sense the landscape of the garden for the artist /creator could be interpreted as a site of transgression where the boundary of hidden secrets is trespassed. It is a site of cultural mnemonic.

Given its particular characteristics in the practices of connoisseurship and display, how does the *yaji garden* fit in the order of contemporary art institutions? Or asking the question in reverse: how may the contemporary museum be problematised by the

yaji garden? The contemporary museum is complex and rich in implications as it takes inspiration from multiple historical institutions, and today its voracious creativity also prompts it to gradually take over functions served by other types of cultural institutions.

The religiosity of the museum experience is evidently a legacy of the Christian church, and artworks are made sacred through apparatuses borrowed from church experience. The predilection of the white cube toward visuality is also derived from a religious mode of spiritual worship, and this is essential to the modern museum experience. Christian eschatology finds its way quietly into the history museum, transformed into assumptions about the linearity and ethos of history. The implication of art as a source of 'knowledge production' finds kinship with the Enlightenment, especially its institution of the *wunderkammer*. What has been most criticised by post-colonial analysis is the hidden hegemonic agenda of the museum of anthropology and museum of world cultures. They continue to exercise authority lent by the ancient museum of imperial conquests, which imposed imperial cultural order on civilisations of the conquered. In the early modern era the museum of loot merged with modern science to become the museum of anthropology, but implications of the imposition of cultural order have remained, which in an oblique way continue to endorse the modern museum of art. Today the cultural specificity of the white cube is becoming increasingly apparent, and to its credit, the museum not only embraces the richness of its diverse ancestry and also, through sustained efforts to resolve the legacy of imperial history, has now evolved into a platform of creative richness and openness, so much so that the contemporary museum finds itself being adopted globally.

How the *yaji garden* may thrive in contemporary times remains a challenge for practitioners. As a contemporary institution the *yaji garden* requires a critical appraisal of its apparatuses, especially its cultural specificity, and reconsider itself in terms of a new global institution open to the world. The special dynamism and openness of contemporary museums benefit from a particular European tradition of iconoclasm, which emphasises the 'new' and the 'radical'. And as an open forum for negotiation of ideologies, the contemporary platform keeps alive the memory of the Greek agora, emphasising democratic participation. How the *yaji garden* may offer fresh possibilities while maintaining dialogue with its historical legacy will depend on the creative adaptability of its adherents.

An interesting place to start is to investigate how 'art' is defined in the *yaji garden*. It is well known that Chinese 'fine' art is heavily prejudiced towards the written word; after painting and calligraphy, seal carving is probably the only legitimate addition to Chinese 'fine arts' in recent centuries. But the *yaji* gathering also brings together diverse 'artistic' activities: music, performance, appreciation of antiquities and curiosities, writing poetry, enjoyment of incense and tea, and, importantly, lively conversation. In other words, the experience encompasses the intellect and all sensible faculties. This suggests a perimeter of art that is expandable through creative interaction. There is a hint of the spirit of the *wunderkammer* in the literati's predilection for 'curiosities', manifest in the connoisseurship of exotic rocks and roots. The interest in things 'exotic' comes from a genealogy of knowledge other than the Enlightenment, and here the boundary separating natural things and 'art' is negotiable. The objective world is not radically outside the domain of subjectivity. In the literati studio, 'craft' transforms into 'art' if it is perceived to incarnate with natural powers.

Unlike the museum, the *yaji garden* is an art site without an archival collection. The modern museum derives power from its authority over archival history: it justifies its collecting by asserting an artwork's novelty and its departure from earlier art, but the novelty of

'new' creativity may only be demonstrated through historical precedence. Implicit in the authority to endorse the new is the legitimation of 'novelty' as a necessary criterion for 'art'. Built into this structure is a teleological bias towards the linearity of historical development. The *yaji garden* is not concerned with novel originality; its claim to authority comes from its metaphoric relation to cosmos/nature, and reference to art history is less about evolution than exemplary models to be admired. As the *yaji garden* is not dependent on the principle of accumulation and progression, its success is contingent upon the quality and reputation of its current participants, so its openness and freedom from the tyranny of 'the new' likewise accounts for its weakness as an institution.

It is a moot point to speculate on the *yaji garden's* potential as a platform for socially critical art, a role in which the contemporary museum distinguishes itself. The contemporary museum is only truly radical when it goes beyond the purely intellectual and cultural, and ventures to negotiate sensitive ideological-political positions; this appears to be the underlying point of attraction of this hugely successful modern institution. If the European tradition of iconoclasm and critique of secular law is its original inspiration, then the institutional structure underlying its mentality must be Europe's parallel (and contesting) governmental powers of State and Religion. The radicality of the modern museum is a legacy of Church power, which has always claimed a legal position above that of secular law, and offers the space of spirituality for political critique. To be placed above the law, metaphorically if not legally, allows the contemporary museum to become the platform for difficult ideological and cultural negotiations.

How may one understand this modern role of the museum in terms of the *yaji garden*? The contestation between God and Caesar is not a Chinese tradition, but between scholar-officials and the court there is a continuous history. The nature of the literati in China was not the same as that of modern intellectuals; the former were by training devoted to public affairs, but unlike the critical intellectual, those who succeeded in public examinations could move on to official administrative positions. There was the theoretical possibility for the literati in realising their social-political ideals. This means the scholar class, artists included, shared a common worldview and looked upon affairs of the state to be their calling. The *yaji garden* provided a site where the literati gathered outside of the concerns of worldly affairs, but worldly affairs was never far from their concerns. Although the cosmic reference of a garden's 'mountain and water' (*shan shui*, Chinese term for 'landscape') carries no political weight, it keeps worldly affairs in perspective. One may say mindfulness about cosmic order keeps the human order in check, and mindfulness about the natural world also makes a sympathetic partner of today's environmentalist green movement.

Many well-known political activities did actually happen in the garden, a late dynastic example being the nineteenth-century revolutionary group *Xiao Dao Hui*, who plotted rebellion against the Qing dynasty in the famous Yuyuan Garden next to Shanghai's City Temple. However, purely as a site, the garden carries only faint memories as a space outside the law; the clearest reference to this privilege can be traced to the age of the famous Orchid Pavilion gathering in 353 AD. This space was the imperial garden Hualin Yuan, situated at the northeast corner of the imperial palace (incidentally the layout of palace grounds was similar to the Forbidden City in Beijing today). Between the 3rd and 6th century AD, Hualin Yuan served as a private site of pleasure for the emperor to relax with his ministers, but incongruously, it was here in the garden that he also customarily exercised his sovereign right of granting royal pardon to convicted criminals--a special privilege that stood above national law. There are no records explaining the choice of the

imperial garden as the site for exercising this supra-judicial power, particularly as Hualin Yuan was situated just to the north of the court of justice.

Apart from its democratic appeal to the public, for the museum institution to qualify as 'modern' depends equally on the rationalisation of its profession. Increasingly in recent decades, compartmentalised professionalism in the art system and the museum has reduced the holistic experience of art to specialised knowledge. Specialisation rationalises the art world into the fields of 'artist', 'critic', 'curator', 'audience' and 'market', with the implication that aesthetic authority rests with the 'critics' and 'curators' as 'aesthetic professionals'. This reflects today's realities; with globalisation and the expansion of the art field, the proliferation of exhibitions makes it impossible for the layman to get adequately acquainted with latest developments, and the curator now ironically also takes on the role of art's professional audience.

The professionalisation of the art sector in modern times shares a fate with the rest of the capitalist world. When the audience is not taken into account at the site of exhibition production, the market inadvertently moves in, making itself the principal space for public participation. Furthermore, in recent decades the market has been aided by another turn in artistic trends, which is that of multi-culturalism. The identity politics of multi-culturalism has been the intellectual strategy deployed to splinter and contain the legitimate claims of post-colonialism, which complains of hegemonic oppression by the intellectual machinery of previous colonial powers. Multi-culturalism agrees strategically with the complaints of the subaltern (of hegemonic oppression), and conveniently proceeds to acknowledge the diversity of cultures by putting each in its own pigeon-hole of cultural identity, without letting go of its own dominant position of arbitrator. The adverse effect of this strategy is that it implies that cultural knowledge is fundamentally insulate within its own cultural-historical confines, and art is trapped as a result of its cultural identity. The uncertain success of global platforms in dealing with this form of cultural politics has given market consensus the opportunity to become the only universal reference. The sudden boom of the market of contemporary art in parts of the world previously uncharted by significant art activities is both a blessing and a worry; blessing in that new creativity finds a broader audience, and a worry in that art may turn into yet another product of the 'creative industry'.

The historical model of the *yaji garden* offers a perspective to reflect on the art of contemporary times. The phenomenon of the recent proliferation of biennials is an interesting case. New biennials hosted by urban centres from around the globe are event-based, and they are formed principally around the interaction between artists, curators and specialists. Although the public is welcome and encouraged, yet they are no more than adjunct spectators. The biennial is a successful step in moving beyond the monolithic museum, and it may perhaps be provocatively interpreted as a form of mega-*yaji* (without the garden and its cosmic implications). At the biennial, aesthetic interaction between artists, curators and specialists take precedence over the authority of the typical modern museum, and there is no attempt to impose a consensus; diverse cultural positions are respected for their ability to engage the event.

While the *yaji garden* continues to evolve within its traditional confines, it hopefully brings a fresh context for thinking about dynamic, event-based practices of display and art experience. As a laboratory for aesthetic sensibilities and incubator of artistic imagination, the on-going project of *yaji garden* should remain an open invitation.

Arseny Zhilyaev Second Advents: On the Issue of Planning in Contemporary Art

It was the second month since I had been resurrected under the Cradle of Humankind program, and the second week of our orbital revolution around the Earth on a rocket. I was very pleased with myself, as my intuitive guesses had turned out to be extremely close to the truth. I was now flying back and forth around the rocket and almost crying tears of joy, like a child. The puzzled workers tried to ask me how I was feeling, but I just gave them masculine hugs and laughed crazily. I spent hours by the portholes, feasting my eyes on the cosmic world through the thick glass of the illuminator, which was armored with a special metal screen. The sky behind the portholes was the same pitch black, blacker than the blackest soot. I could see all the old constellations – so many stars! But why do they look so dead? There's no life in them; they don't seem to twinkle. They're just dots of light... How clear they are! They seem so near, and the firmament seems so small! And how strange our Earth looks! It takes up nearly half the sky (120 degrees), and looks not convex but concave, like a bowl with people living on the inside. The brim of this bowl is very uneven, dotted here and there with mountainous peaks that stand out like huge teeth. Around the edges there is a haziness, and farther still a series of oblong gray patches. These are clouds, darkened by a thick layer of atmosphere. The patches stretch around the Earth's circumference. The farther they are from the edges, the lighter and broader they seem, and towards the center they become irregular in shape, but not stretched out. The Earth, Sun, and stars seem very close, practically within reach! They all seem to be attached to the inside of a very small sphere. The Sun seems closer – small and bluish, but how hot it is! The stars, too, are mostly bluish, but some are other colors as well.

The rocket seems motionless from the inside, but this is an illusion. According to the plan carried out by automatic pilot, the rocket must now be in perpetual orbit around the Earth. Its orientation is stable: thousands of kilometers from the Earth's surface, traveling with a constant speed of about seven and a half kilometers per second. It should circle the globe approximately once every hour and forty minutes. Like the Moon, we are now an Earth satellite, and like the Moon we can never fall back because the gravitational attraction is balanced by its centrifugal force. I feel so comfortable with this stability in motion. Yet I am also worried. Have we actually succeeded? Though Newton and Laplace can surely be trusted, I still can't believe this.

* * *

We face every minute of our everyday lives with planning. And this planning governs not only our bodies and the free will of our psychological expression: it also regulates our communication in different fields, such as in public spaces or the Internet, and in political and economic spheres including our families and intimate relationships. It is obvious that the borders of capitalistic negative freedom are hidden and camouflaged in order to create a great illusion of unlimited democratic participation and creative expression. Contemporary art is one of the most important mirrors and indicators of this great illusion. There is nothing special or new in this thesis. Plenty of writing and thought has been devoted to disclosing the hidden agenda of contemporary art as part of a post-political, post-ideological world.

However, the issue of planning has not been discussed beyond the possible utility of art pieces for activists' creative work, or as a specific effect of art consumption in the case of relational aesthetics. Going beyond these, we see the issue of planning more as a political

and philosophical demand for a limiting of history, progress, or human development in general. Thus, if we act along rational coordinates, for example by organizing everyday life or even fighting for political freedom, we again tend to do spontaneous things here and now, regardless of the future or the past. Unfortunately, we can only reach predictable and unsatisfactory results – or we can do nothing at all, which seems a smarter and more intellectual (or exclusive) form of behavior. Of course, this effort is usually not enough to address the complexity of contemporary economic and political conditions. As a result, people should surrender to the overwhelming force of life's contingencies organized by the detached rationality of an evil that drives its dream to an apocalyptic finale. The great art of depicting this tragedy is our humiliating resignation. Since we learned about the possibility of the molecular decomposition of our bodies in atomic fire, and of our subjectivities due to market will, nothing better has expressed such knowledge than action painting or dripping. The chaotic ornament of gravity pulls us back to the flat ground, to the brutal truth of our origin, and to the inevitable finale. That's why we, as part of the dead generations, will continue reproducing this traumatic symbol of nihilistic expression again and again under the conditions of contemporary art, and in the face of unknown futures.

However, there was another answer to the very same question, and it was *Black Square* by Malevich, which had been created almost half a century before Pollock invented dripping. Yes, we have here again the impression of image decomposition: the dark, unknown end, the pure materiality of an object. Yet there is a great difference. On the one hand, we have the spontaneous, negative freedom of the postwar American avant-garde. The idea is simple: to give as much credit as possible to the power of gravity, and therefore to attempt to produce an ideal image of human weakness faced with the contingency of nature. On the other hand, we have total control of creative negation in the proletarian avant-garde. Malevich spent several years working on the simple gesture of depicting only a black square. The artist understood his invention not as a chaotic or destructive act, but on the contrary, as a search for a new superorder hidden behind the contingencies of everyday life. Malevich once wrote to his colleague Matushin: "The keys of Suprematism are leading me to what is yet unrealized. The new painting does not belong to the Earth exclusively. The Earth is abandoned as a house eroded by wood fretting. Indeed, the human and his consciousness are aspiring for space, for the separation from the globe." The artist hated nature and the forms derived from its laws. "Reproducing the beloved objects and corners of nature is like a thief getting excited by his shackled feet," he suggested in his *The Manifesto of Suprematism*. Thus, Malevich established a particular vision of space, more or less the same as when cosmonauts first saw Earth from above. That's why suprematic paintings don't have the traditional bottom-top orientations that depend on gravity. Malevich's *Black Square* is not chaos or empty space, but a new, superordered space. The artist shared this interpretation of cosmos as an order with Russian cosmists, and Nikolai Fedorov influenced avant-garde artists deeply.¹

According to Fedorov's interpretation of art, it all started with the first human creative gesture of bipedalism, which marked the vector of further development against gravity and the chaotic attraction of Earth. Then the once-mimetic version (even if we talk about the mimesis of capitalistic markets or about the fear of nuclear war and bodily decomposition) should make way for the art of real-life creation, which would end up as artistic transformation in the context of a life-giving museum of the whole universe, where the resurrected generations of humans would be settled. The philosopher did not pay much attention to the transformation of one type of art into another. But we do have an example of an attempt in this direction: the postrevolutionary Soviet Productivism and Constructivism theorized by Boris Arvatov. Productivism was based on the Marxist interpretation of art

as a place for the imaginary solution to interclass contradictions. After the victory of the proletarian revolution and the gradual vanishing of classes along with the state as a whole – and therefore any preconditions for social conflicts – art would become part of everyday life and production. This would allow for a transition from the mimetic art of traditional media to the real-life creation of the future. We usually hold this as the ultimate limit for modernist and contemporary art projects. Moreover, according to Boris Arvatov, even traditional media will fit into the society of the future, because even Communists will have bodies and affects (death and sexual encounters). And that’s where Fedorov’s theory begins.

However, intellectual speculation on the father of Russian cosmism looks too radical; perhaps we can reconstruct his vision for the future of art and humankind from the contemporary art perspective. Perhaps uncovering the cosmos as a space for restoring – or even inventing – order and the main goal of humankind’s efforts will give us another way to avoid the dark end of everyday contingencies.

* * *

Newton and Galileo liked sitting with the workers and spending hours telling them about how the Earth and the cosmos were organized. At first, it seemed pretty funny to me. I also tried taking part in this enlightening entertainment. However, over time it began to seem like we were watching the same bad theatrical performance each time. I didn’t want to leave my compartment anymore. Nevertheless, each day we gathered in the big cylindrical cabin in the middle of the ship. It was about four meters in diameter, like the other compartments, but five times longer – twenty meters. It was large enough for twenty people. The doors leading to the other compartments were open, and our companions flew in one after another: one sailing sideways, another upside down, though each thought it was he who was right-side up, and the others were not, that he was motionless while the others were flying about.

Newton would always begin in the same way: “The planet inhabited by humankind represents a sphere with a circumference of forty thousand kilometers. A person walking forty kilometers a day would need a thousand days, or about three years, to circle it.” Then, one of the workers would inevitably get up and exclaim: “But what supports this enormous sphere?” “The sphere,” Galileo continued,

rests on nothing and is supported by nothing. It hurtles through the ether like a balloon driven by the wind. The globe is a double magnet. The first magnetism directs the magnetic needle of the compass; the second magnetism is called gravity. It is the latter that holds on to every object on the Earth’s surface: the oceans, the atmosphere, people. If it were not for gravity, the air, thanks to its ability to expand, would long since have escaped from the Earth. Similarly, a single leap would carry a person away forever and make him a free body in the ether.

Each day, the same words, again and again. Sometimes I felt I was a mouse in someone’s laboratory, and my colleagues were wooden dolls whose mouths opened and produced sounds driven by gear mechanisms inside their bodies.

I haven’t had a chance to take a bath yet. Meanwhile, our bath consists of a sealed cylindrical tank three meters in diameter with one entrance, which rotates around its axis. The tank is half-filled with water. To take a bath, you set the tank rotating. The water flows to the walls and makes a cylindrical surface of uniform depth. Thanks to the centrifugal force, bathers can stand chest-high in the water, their heads pointing towards each other like the spokes of a wheel. An excellent place to bathe, with several windows and various devices.

One day, we pushed off and flew to the bathhouse compartment. We found a large drum about four meters long and three across occupying almost the whole of the compartment. In the absence of gravity the drum revolved by inertia and only a slight impetus was needed to keep it turning. On one side of it, at the drum axis, was a hatch about a meter in diameter, which we opened. Removing our colorful loin belts and flowing robes – a very light and unburdensome costume – we plunged one after another into the bath. Revolving along with the drum, the water spread over its circumference. Pushing and jostling, we flew into the water. We began revolving together with it and regained our weight. With satisfaction we soaked ourselves in the cool liquid! How easy it was to swim there! I saw Newton above my head ducking and splashing with the same delight as me, with Franklin parallel to him. Some bodies were perpendicular to one another – to see Newton, I had to lean back as if inspecting a church dome. The men stood with their heads close and their feet pointing away. This was the only peculiarity of the bath. In other respects, it was just like any on Earth. We ducked, dived, caught one another by the feet, splashed about, swam this way and that, splashed the water, squealed and laughed, and, most importantly, felt splendidly refreshed. The artificial gravity wasn't strong. What need did we have for more? It was much easier to swim here than on Earth.

* * *

The first initiative of the future museum could be the achievement of a previously existing goal: to design an all-encompassing collection of every artwork ever created by humans. Museums have always discussed this issue. However, especially heated disputes occurred in the twentieth century when people learned to reproduce pieces of art by means of technology. We can remember the project by André Malraux, with his imaginary museum that could emerge out of the ruins of authenticity to demonstrate a global style to the whole world. From the perspective of contemporary media, a museum like that has already been created in part on the internet, at least in the form of a non-systematized archive. It should be noted that implementing the process of collecting every artwork is still an unconscious and often non-collaborative process, despite the universal nature of communications networks. Not all historic pieces of art have been digitized and made available to the public, not by a long shot.

However, archives alone are not enough. Even Fedorov would speak out against using archives solely as storage spaces. Exhibitions and research projects should, rather, reanimate what is shelved in archives, thus paving the way for true resurrection. Reanimating an artwork from the past with an absolute value unaffected by historical transformation would mean including the artwork in our present-day context, providing an opportunity for its exhibition, and bringing the hopes of this art to real life. Moreover, if we assume that art has its invariant roots in the (un)conscious craving for justice and eternal life but is split by circumstances into mimetic (Ptolemaic) art and performance (Copernican) art, we can say that society – much like the art of the future – should be deeply indebted to the past, which served as the backbone for its achievements. Therefore, any type of art either attempts to solve real-life social conflicts in artificial ways or stems from psychological traumas and compulsive affects, the most powerful of which are love and the fear of death. Providing conditions for Copernican art (where all social contradictions have been resolved, death has been defeated, and a new understanding of love has become possible) that facilitates real-life transformations will in fact represent an actualization of the hopes cherished by the art of the past – its resurrection in a sense. Consequently, the collection of those hopes and their artistic reactualization in the art of resurrection is the ethical obligation of the artist of the future. The activities of the contemporary museum have already been serving these purposes to some extent. As the internet assumes the role of an archive, a *Mnemosyne Atlas*, the museum takes on the function of artistic conceptualization.

Not only visual arts, but all artistic human activities should undergo a procedure of all-out museumification with subsequent artistic reactualization. Despite the ambitiousness of such a goal, some moves have already been made in this direction, such as in the printing of books. Without question, this archive should be publicly available in the future. Blogs and social networks can also be regarded as special types of storage for literature and other oeuvres, and video archives have long become a conventional source of information. As printing and 3-D translation technologies develop, we will also be able to see 3-D arts, and arts related to time and the human body.

* * *

One day, we had a delegation from another planet. Their spaceship was many times larger than ours and seemed to move as if against the laws of physics. The delegation consisted mostly of strange-looking kids. Their clothes were so old-fashioned and unusual, I thought for a moment that I was in a fantastic time-machine novel. The group was led by an alien whose appearance differed strikingly from the others. He had an ever-changing form, sparkling and iridescent. I had never heard the name of their planet before. Truth be told, I was so scared by their unexpected visit that I couldn't find it in my heart to ask more questions. The nice part of the visit was that they had badges with my portrait on their chests. I have no idea how, but they all knew my last name; they used it all the time and even pointed at me. The leader was speaking an unknown language, calling my name from time to time and pointing at me, too. At the end of the dialogue, they asked to say some words about Earth:

There was a single authority for the whole world: a congress of elected representatives of all nations. It had been inaugurated more than seventy years ago, and it dealt with all of humankind's problems. Wars were impossible. Misunderstandings among nations were settled by peaceful means. Armies were drastically limited, or rather, they were labor armies. Thanks to the fairly favorable conditions of the preceding one hundred years, the population had tripled. Commerce, engineering, the arts, and agriculture had progressed considerably. Huge metal dirigibles capable of lifting thousands of tons made travel and the traffic of goods both convenient and inexpensive. Especially effective were the largest airships, which by using air currents were employed to transport almost free of charge such inexpensive commodities as wood, coal, and metals. Airplanes were used for the rapid transport of small numbers of passengers or valuable commodities; most widespread were single- and two-seater airplanes. Humankind was peacefully advancing along the road of progress, but the rapid growth of the population was a matter of concern for all thinking people and rulers. Ideas about the technical feasibility of conquering and exploiting the deserts of the universe had been voiced more than a hundred years before. In 1903, a Russian scholar wrote on this subject and proved mathematically, on the basis of scientific data available at the time, the feasibility of colonizing the solar system.

The children started applauding and yelling with a heavy accent, "Tsi-ol-kov-sky! Tsi-ol-kov-sky!" After that, we took a commemorative photo.

* * *

Following all art, humankind should focus on technology. The first museums of technology and daily life were founded at the end of the nineteenth century. However, as museums of art, they only provide a fragmentary picture of the past, especially with the number of technical innovations increasingly integrated into everyday life, their ubiquity, and the ever-increasing rate of modernization. With the development of production capacity and 3-D printing techniques, it will become vital to reconstruct the ancient mechanisms that have not survived to the present day. The same is true for all 3-D objects created by human

beings. The near- and far-space colonization project should inevitably include ancient city reconstruction plans, including detailed description of everyday life and specifics of the economy.

We are now coming to the core of Nikolai Fedorov's project and to the quintessence of the avant-garde museum, i.e., to the resurrection of dead generations. By then, most likely, a friendly, collective artificial intelligence will have been created by all living humans. This will become possible due to the development of production and of the *general intellect*. The development of a collective artificial intelligence will mean that enough collective effort exists to implement all-universe projects. The procedure of resurrection will most likely be performed in the name of a collective artist-curator.

From then on, Earth, which will have hardly been used for creative practices at this point, should be transformed into a total museum. The resurrection of generations from the past will begin with living people whose material will be used to bring their parents back to life, from the latest to the earliest generation, just as Fedorov originally proposed. However, this solution won't be enough, as not all who lived on Earth had direct descendants. This is to say that all biological matter and layers of soil on Earth should have to undergo the most meticulous molecular analysis to detect the genes of dead people. A special museological discipline, genetic archeology, should be developed to provide research in this area. In cases when it appears impossible to find and resurrect a person directly, artificial genetic modulation should be applied based on surviving historical data.

One such possible case might be a new physical life for Jesus Christ. Fedorov did not mention this possibility, but the philosopher's call for the physical resurrection of each person who has ever lived on Earth implies the second advent of Jesus - even though he was only half human. This opens a new vision for active Christianity. Not only should humankind play an active role in producing the conditions for the resurrection and eternal survival of all generations, but it should also recreate God through human effort. The miracle of the Second Advent will mark the phase when the human and the Godly will become one again - not in an individual body but in the body of all people who have ever lived on Earth. And this unity will last forever.

An all-encompassing collection of contemporary art, i.e., the art of a simultaneous coexistence of all the generations that have ever lived on Earth, will form the constant exposition of the cosmic museum. Quite obviously, this constancy will exist in a state of permanent change, as people of different generations will be moving, interacting, living their creative lives, and playing artistic and curatorial roles at the same time. In the end, this will help eliminate differences between constant, historically organized exposition and temporary artistic expression over time. Meanwhile, contemporaneity and contemporary art will find their ultimate meaning and begin their new history. At this point, the mission of the cosmic museum as it was seen by Nikolai Fedorov will have been complete.

Yet it is already obvious that the philosopher's project should be updated. Aside from art, mechanistic worldviews, and previous generations, the latter will have their feet on the emancipated human race's evolutionary ancestors, from Java Men to bacteria and protozoa - including the evolutionary dead-ends that still influence our development and emancipation indirectly. Thus, when all the generations have been resurrected and settled on planets, when the total body of culture and the technical facilities that accelerated human development have been respectively distributed, it will be the human ancestors' time. A large-scale museum-and-nature experiment will most probably require that planets with conditions

similar to those on Earth at different eras are identified or created. Each of these planets will be announced as unique open-air museums where all biological species will be able to live in their natural habitats.

It is likely that this phase of the museum experiment will take place in a super-advanced civilization of Type IV, according to the Kardashev scale. It implies that the contemporary art of the future and the artists who create it will face the final and most important problem in overcoming the finiteness of the universe, which has been expanding since the Big Bang, but which will have its ultimate fate in the Big Crunch, or in heat death due to increasing entropy. The avant-garde cosmic museum will grow boundless along with its architects, who will have to make their last effort to accomplish the mission. The effort will consist of creating conditions required for museumification and the subsequent artistic resurrection of the whole universe, from the Big Bang until the end of time. Only then can the mission of contemporary art and the cosmic museum, as we see it today, be considered complete.

.....

1 See Boris Groys, "Cosmic Anxiety: The Russian Case," *e-flux journal* no. 65 (May–August 2015) and Boris Groys, "Immortal Bodies," in *Going Public* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2010), 152–168.

Dunja Zupančič::Dragan Živadinov:: Miha Turšič Actuator::MG

Postgravityart is launching its first satellite Umbot::MG in its 50-year theater project Noordung::1995-2045. Over the remaining three decades of the theater project, all 14 actors will be replaced by technological substitutes, which in turn will be put into Earth's orbit in 2045, marking the end of this 50-year project. The Satellite Umbot::MG is a substitute for actress Milena Grm, who passed away in 2011.

Noordung::1995-2045

At the beginning of this project we, Dunja Zupančič, Dragan Živadinov and Miha Turšič, on 20 April 1995 at 22.00, together with fourteen actors and actresses (Milena Grm, Mateja Rebolj, Romana Šalehar, Maruša Oblak, Marinka Štern, Mojca Partljič, Iva Zupančič, Damjana Černe, Uroš Maček, Mario Šelih, Marko Mlačnik, Robert Prebil, Borut Veselko, Jonas Žnidaršič) performed our theatrical biomechatronical projectile, Noordung::1995-2045. For this performance the spectators' view was directed downwards from the upper region of the dome.

A decade later the first performance of Noordung::1995-2005-2045 was staged on the model of the International Space Station (ISS) at the Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre in Star City, Russia, on the same date, at the same hour, using the same actors and text. The second performance took place ten years after the first, also on the same day, at the same hour, and according to the same scheme at KSEVT (Cultural Centre for European Space Technologies) in Vitanje, Slovenia. The remaining three repeat performances will take place in 2025, 2035, with the grand finale in 2045.

Should any of the actors or actresses die, they are to be replaced, *mise-en-scene*, with remote-controlled abstracts: by a sign. The actress's text would be replaced by a melody, an actor's replaced by a rhythm. In other words, by 2045 there will only be 14 signs remaining,

each a substitute for the actors' bodies; similarly, music will replace their texts in the theatrical bio-mechatronic projectile Noordung::1995-2045.

In 2045, Dragan Živadinov will put the actors' substitute signs into an equatorial orbit aboard a space shuttle. There he will install these signs at 14 points encircling the Earth. Thus, in outer space, these signs will become operational artistic satellites: umbots. Each of these 14 umbots will then send syntapien information about the actors and actresses both to the planet and into deep space.

We:: Dunja Zupančič, Dragan Živadinov and Miha Turšič, stand for abstract theater under conditions of zero gravity, for absolute zero!

Supreorganism

In the wake of a half-century's intense exploration of outer space, from satellites and space stations to post-terrestrial physics, Man is about to inhabit, in one form or another, our planet's closest celestial neighbor – the Moon. If we consider a low orbiting space station merely an extension of Earth's ecology in view of the necessity to frequently re-supply it from home base, the Moon already qualifies as an Other World. We must now, on the verge of this emancipatory/exploratory endeavor, investigate and decide whether or not we are equipped with a sufficient understanding of our non-terrestrial existence. This is our question.

A century ago Kazimir Malevich envisioned Planits, artistic beings intended to exist in outer space. His Supremus collection was more than just the beginning of non-representational art. It was also a sketch of a transhumanistic vision to leave, as K. E. Tsiolkovsky once referred to space exploration, our human Cradle of the Mind.

The year 2016 marks the 100th anniversary of Supremus N.56, a central icon of the Suprematistic morphology of non-representational art in reference to space.

Today, cosmistic and suprematistic visions are close to being fulfilled. We have scientific technology, on-board architectons to explore non-terrestrial landscapes of all possible chemical and physical conditions, from celestial bodies to subatomic particles and the electromagnetic spectrum. We have developing technologies that enable us to better perceive foreign environments, even though the entity behind these technological augmentations remains terrestrially bound and human in nature. Due to contemporary developments in biology, chemistry, philosophy and art, we now know that the production of the artificial is not the exclusive domain of humankind. Studies of the post-human, the non-human, and post-domain networks, enable us to understand our anthropic existence.

Remember: 20th century revolutions were experiments made in order to construct a new society, to create new humanities, new values, as well as new domains.

Space – or Cosmos – was one of the cornerstones for this project. Sending man into space is neither an elitist privilege nor ideological propaganda. It is the engineering of a new society. Along the same line of thinking, Cosmonauts were, and still are, representatives in a non-terrestrial adjacent possible; the space station an embryo of the Earth's life; space probes projectiles of terrestrial potentiality. Space as the ultimate Other is changing the human into the ahuman, into a Cosmonaut, into a satellite, into a space probe. Today our conceivable non-terrestrial future existence is only tele-perceived. The next step, Malevich's "artistic

beings” and Tsiolkovsky’s “Mind” in the form of emancipated space automata, will leave the Earth behind (and may never look back). Their new society should not be understood as the transformation of the individual; this society will be born through the transformation of our species. The next form of Homo species does not, will not, appear as we appear, not visually nor otherwise. This future unknown form will be technological and non-terrestrial. It will emerge as a supreorganism.

“Working on Suprematism I have discovered that its forms have nothing in common with the technology of the Earth’s surface. All technical organisms are nothing but small satellites – the entire living world is ready to fly into space and take a special position. For each such satellite is fitted with reason and able to live its own life.”

Kazimir Malevich, Suprematism 1920, UNOVIS, Vitebsk, 15 December 1920

MG+MSUM Moderna galerija / Museum of Modern Art
plus Muzej sodobne umetnosti Metelkova / Museum of Contemporary Art Metelkova
Windischerjeva 2, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija, T: +3861 2416800, www.mg-lj.si, info@mg-lj.si

The project was supported by:



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA KULTURO



Art Finance
GAZPROMBANK GROUP



GOETHE
INSTITUT



莫恩周文翁基金會
Moenchiu Foundation



hanart
PROJECTS
漢雅項目

