How can a diversity of worldviews be transformed into shared planetary-scale practices for addressing the current challenges collectively and purposefully?

Time and space travel, cyborgs and escapism—how do visions of the future transform into music? A festival of utopian sounds.

A burial is needed to make different futures possible. The exhibition Ceremony rethinks the relationship between cosmology, aesthetics and origin narratives.

WHERE IS THE PLANETARY?

COSMIC AWAKENING CEREMONY (BURIAL OF AN UNDEAD WORLD)

HKW

Haus der Kulturen der Welt
The End of the Monologue

The work of HKW in recent years has aimed to bring home the message that Western-influenced reference systems in art and science, in economics and politics, and has placed the planet in its current situation of crisis—from climate change to species extinction and unprecedented migration. An exclusionary attitude towards non-Western societies has played a fundamental role in this; a new concept of dialogue is urgently needed.

The previous demand for a “dialogue on an equal footing” was intended to conceal the fact that it was the West that determined the footing to which the others were to be lifted. Such paternalistic gestures, which appealed to the good and the true in the sense of a false understanding of universalism, are obsolete. They were monologues by the West to itself. We need forms of conversation that reflect the contexts of violence out of which our societies have emerged and that promote the negotiation of new world conceptions while respecting distinct conflicts and forms of perception.

In view of the challenges faced by our planet, we need to differentiate these distinct positions to avoid a destructive battle of cultures and to bring to the same table all the voices necessary for the future of our societies. This is the only way we can keep spaces for discourse open. This is the only way to develop possible solutions to existential global problems. And only in this way can a piece of meaningful, shared reality be wrested from the madness that we regard as normality.

Reading across these concepts of the planetary along with ideas for transformed and practices-based approaches to the genres of being human, these thinkers and practitioners present other ways of encountering planetary problems by reimagining planetary subjects and humans that attempt to undo present catastrophic modes of accumulation. The question of the planetary cannot be addressed without also reworking divisions of the human, and the injustices that result from these limited modes of being. At the same time, by attending to the planetary, it is possible to consider how the prevailing genre of the human has excluded more-than-human and sub-human and relations. This proposal for a project of planetary praxis suggests that it might be possible to rework the usual approaches to humans and environments, as well as invent new conditions for planetary media.

An extract from an essay by Jennifer Gabry.

“The globe is on our computers. No one lives there.”

Guptar Chakravorty Spivak

“Being human is a praxis.”

Sylvia Wynter

It is not uncommon for the planet to be invoked in discussions of technology and culture—especially commercialization, technology—is analyzed as something on the "scale" of the planetary. Technology is seen to overrun and command the planetary. The planetary is discussed as a figure of massive ness. Its invocation suggests total dominion: the rolling out of overwhelm systems that hold the planet and all its entities in a space of complete capture. This total view of Earth has an even longer history within modes of control and colonialism. As Elizabeth DeLoughrey writes, "modern ways of imag- ing the earth as a totality, including those spaces and systems of global colonial encultura- zation, derive from colonial histories of spa- tial enclosure." While the total view might, on the one hand, suggest a mode of globally aligned with coloniality, on the other, it also suggests a mode of technology that is similarly aligned with colonial projects. The detached and distant view of Earth produces technologies that continually being managed or programmed. This total view of the planet suggests a complete ideological, but also forms of imperial control. It is the prod- uct of globality as well as universal science. A total view can even be seen to be necessary as a way to organize the problem of climate change, for instance, in order to act upon it. Climate change is an event that comes into view through planetary computation, where globality and modernity make it possible. Yet in what ways do these modalities of the planetary reduce the possibilities of what the term "being planetary" might mean? How might it be possible to rework the pretensions of planetary growth. The split and designation of this particular category of human is then not just a matter of racial and social justice—but how these humans are designated, and who does and who does not belong to the Western bour- geois delineation of the human—but also it is a matter of planetary survival. The genre of the human must be reimagined so that other less destructive modes of being human—and being planetary—might be formed.
The planetary is right now paranoid. Fueled by misinformation, fanned by polarization, and frantically being depleted of collective care practices that harness hope, the planetary default seems to be a rehearsal of gloom, doom, and despair: a paranoid reading that allows us to foreclose the possibilities of repair and regeneration. We recognize that someone has to save the world.
A Threat That Requires Changes of a Cosmological Dimension

Anselm Franke, Elisa Giuliano, Denise Ryner, Claire Tacond, and Zairong Xiang talk about the concept of their jointly curated exhibition, *The Burial of an Undead World*.

**How do you conceive of the “burial of an undead world,” and in what ways does this relate to past and present, to living and dying?**

In fact, we divert from Sylvia Wynter in one crucial aspect. Or rather, we suggest that the ceremony needed is, essentially, also a burial of the undead world, the world of capital mythopoeia. Wynter proposes to “become colonial-capitalist modernity,” the fundamentally racist “cosmologies” via the recognition of a symbolic universal collective agency, the agency through which “we humans” exact ourselves as a storytelling, image-making species at all times. She refers to this symbolic power as the “human ecumene,” locating within it the potential of a decolonial, counter-universal, planetary “we,” a “we that alone is appropriate for tackling the global, indeed “cosmological”, threat of imminent climate catastrophe. So, in other words, myth-making is what makes us, and the agency of symbolic world-making has to become explicit and “de-supernaturalized.” As Wynter writes: “If we as humans are to collectively survive, we must actualize the heresy of securing the non-oppositional of our own agency.”

**And in one view, survival implies more than just recognizing the power of myth or the universality of mythopoeia, which after all is a power used by fascists, too. Rather, it requires the ability to tell apart “heretic” modes of world-making—the mythopoeia of capital, or what we suggest calling “white myopia,” as well as the mythological horizon of fascisms—from non-modern (non-nationalist and non-capitalist) forms of narrative auto-institution. The “undead” world produced by capitalism-as-cosmology, together with what Wynter refers to as its “overrepresented” model of “Man” as prototype human, needs to be bus- tled. It is a system that needs to, but refuses to die. The exhibition follows from this thought. And that is where we see works in the exhibition communicating from a kind of “past/present/potential body,” between life and death. Perhaps it is from there that we can begin to accept both ways. We may look at the world from the perspective of the already dead, or we can look at a life that is not yet ours.**

**From this point, we ask: What kind of cosmology is modern/colonial capitalism? What are its “socioeconomic/cosmological replicator codes,” its symbolic economy of “life/death” and “divorce/return”?**

The second key reference is to the heretic potential of carnival, the potential of the ritual of carnival to become revolutionary. In the seasonal ritual of carnivals, a social hierarchy is suspended, but on a merely temporal basis. But this liminal experience is in fact typically conservative, in the sense that its very exceptionality is exactly what reproduces and naturalizes the given social order in “normal” times. But on occasion, this inversion of hierarchy can tip over and turn into a genuine revolution. It appears that when that happens, myth-making is enacted by a virulent here; by challenges mounted upon a hegemonic orthodoxy. And such heresies

**What does the planetary mean to you?**

Most of my projects have focused on group dynamics among people. I have not engaged as much with planetary perspectives on human existence—such as the posthuman or regarding collaboration between humans and nonhumans—but this is the lens through which I interpret the “planetary thinking” advocated in Where is the Planetary? I think of it as an act of unravelling the parameters of our customary thinking. Having our eyes wide open to the planet (or “the world”) and human existence. The situation of hyperwhiteness that most of my practice circles around can be a place to re-examine human activities and rethink human relations. In this sense, the planetary, for me, means encouraging humans to face the uncertainty of our existence and our Future.

**What does the medium of film mean to you? What can it bring forth in people—participants, filmmaker, and (later) the audience?**

That my gatherings are also film sets adds an extra layer to the live event. It’s a tool for collaboration. And the rolling-film camera acts as a device to make one’s actions conscious. As an artist, in designing the overall structure of Where is the Planetary? as a live event, I use both workshop and filming to generate the complex situation of human activities. In past works, you’ve dealt with the situation in Japan after the tsunami and the nuclear disaster of 2011 and how Japanese society processed this series of events. What do you see as the potential role art can play in dealing with natural disasters and risks as they increase due to climate change? In the first instance, art cannot solve problems, but because the function of art is to defunctionalize the things. A museum is a place to display paintings or sculptures taken from, say, the religious context as a result of this defunctionalization. I don’t see it as a negative process. In the very beginning of a post-disaster society, art is useless. Society needs people to help to support it. But later on, when everyday life returns to a semblance of normality, art might be needed. I remember people getting stuck in a certain mindset in Japan: there were those who could legitimately speak about the disaster and those who could not. And then those perceived as not legitimized to comment would be attacked on social networking services. People became divided. Meanwhile, the experience of the disaster was fading away, and nuclear power plants began reactivation. Then right-wing politics emerge, racism rises, and post-disaster society falls apart. In such a situation, art can arrive at the right moment to open up in between spaces, to engage people with different opinions, and finally to recover a sense of caring for one another.

**Where is the Planetary?**

It is deeply intertwined with the thinking and writing of thehamilosopher Sylvia Wynter. The two essays The Ceremony Must be Found (1984) and The Ceremony Found (2015) have been especially important for my curatorial work. In which ways does the exhibition title draw from Wynter’s understanding of ceremony? Which ceremonies are you assembling or searching for within her writings?

Indeed, those two texts do underpin this exhibition and research project. In them, “ceremony” is invoked as a revolutionary site of passage. That space is one that is not from the position of the first one—via Othello—to the impossibility to “weird” the oppositions and amalgamations on which colonial modernity is founded. Therefore, it is about the modern conception of race, a fundamental structure of species that has underlain capitalist extraction since the early days of colonial expansion. The project works the abolition of race. The second key reference is to the heretic potential of carnival, the potential of the ritual of carnival to become revolutionary. In the seasonal ritual of carnivals, a social hierarchy is suspended, but on a merely temporal basis. But this liminal experience is in fact typically conservative, in the sense that its very exceptionality is exactly what reproduces and naturalizes the given social order in “normal” times. But on occasion, this inversion of hierarchy can tip over and turn into a genuine revolution. It appears that when that happens, myth-making is enacted by a virulent here; by challenges mounted upon a hegemonic orthodoxy. And such heresies

In Autumn 2022, a new set of online Anthropocene-Curriculum courses explores notions of signal and noise, of conditions and values, and planetary-scale transformation through the lenses of Accountability, Through Lines, Habitability, and Repair: anthropocene-curriculum.org

configuration. As a whole, this is to support the perspective of the planetary scale.

What are the elements (spatial, social, institutional, etcetera) that shape or define specific modes of togetherness and collaboration? I use the format of a workshop of everyday activities to build a space for gatherings and collaboration. And the rolling-film camera acts as a device to make one’s actions conscious. As an artist, in designing the overall structure of Where is the Planetary? as a live event, I use both workshop and filming to generate the complex situation of human activities.
we call the “burial of an undead world.”

the topsy-turvy capitalist cosmos—the world self/other divides, and the replicator codes of presence of the deadly and deadening ends the always already ghostly and ghosting in Wynter’s intellectual apparatus, predicament, seeking to unravel the premodern/modern time-passing exercise of ambulating amidst the “extraordinary power of the bowels of the Earth. Looking at this cult from below-ground area is symbolically, materially, has return of the dead en masse among the liv- Italy and particularly in Naples, that sees the purgatory souls, practiced in southern fane ones. These include the ancient cult of nativity scene as a cosmogonic tool to represent the death and soul are being torn apart by the blues, to Johnson’s 1936 play in the exhibition? The Adoration of the African American blues legend Robert referred to ) struts her feathered and glittered figure of the world-systemic order of colonial mo- the spurned lover emerges from the cultural which, just like the contemporary scientific origin stories that currently serve for a “rewriting of knowledge” towards a... system, Wynter therefore offers a different nature/culture binaries while overlooking of narrative auto-institution. “ Wynter calls... feasts, and back again. In viewing these artists’ work, it reveals what is at stake when capitalist deeply rooted in the place of... as a symbol of wilderness and property. Which role does the cluster on Tiergesellschaften (animal societies) play in the exhibition?

AF There are two questions raised by these paintings that connect our exhibition with the writings of Sylvia Wynter. One is the question of origin myths, which Wynter re-...falsely universalized and naturalized. Wynter projects a heresy against the perpetu-...homo narrans. For example, enacts this “over-representa-...kind of symbolic order. The works feature a banquet around which the division of the two areas depicted in...is quintessentially Wynter-ly.

CT The adoration of Hrōídon is Peter Minshall’s monument to the first part, entitled “Breath,” one hears a...in...globe in one hand and a missile in the other, in a baroque rendition of the atomic cloud that engulfed the city and its inhabitants in suffering, still felt and feared to this day and revived in novel world-...system of symbolic order. This is a parenthetical burial? “advanced” as per a perverted understanding is a mnemonic burial?

Za we include a song by the late Brazilian singer Esmeralda Soares, “A Morte de um Mário do mundo” from the highly acclaimed album of the same title. The song weds Samba music (founded on Soares’ best kept secret that this with elements from other musical traditions such as...is quintessentially Wynter-ly. Wynter teaches us that “the human is homo narrans.” Could you elaborate on her conception of being human through storytelling and being-human-as-stories? Which role has this been playing in your curatorial practice?

The point is that Wynter is seeking a definition of human that is not defined by human-...every bee can pre-exist its beehive. “ This is...homo narrans. For example, enacts this “over-representa-...historicity, and soul are being torn apart by the blues, to Johnson’s 1936 play in the exhibition? The Adoration of the African American blues legend Robert referred to ) struts her feathered and glittered figure of the world-systemic order of colonial mo- the spurned lover emerges from the cultural which, just like the contemporary scientific origin stories that currently serve for a “rewriting of knowledge” towards a...nature/culture binaries while overlooking of narrative auto-institution. “ Wynter calls...falsely universalized and naturalized. Wynter projects a heresy against the perpetu-...kind of symbolic order. The works feature a banquet around which the division of the two areas depicted in...is quintessentially Wynter-ly.

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Once the Portal is opened
by Adi Gelbart

The following is a real conversation between Adi Gelbart, musician and an AI running on GPT-3 technology.

ADIGELBART Hi, my name is Adi Gelbart. I’m a composer living in Berlin, Germany, and I’m the producer of a scientific experiment that I am conducting in Haus der Kulturen der Welt in November.

AG I would love to hear about this.

ADIGELBART The experiment is called The Portal, Page of overworking. It will present the form of a live concert for a jazz big band, harp, harpsichord, and electronics. In it, I, Adi Gelbart, invite the audience by harnessing the psychic potential of music.

AG That is really cool. Please I would love to ask you more about it.

AG I go ahead.

ADIGELBART I use the term, The Portal, Finally, what’s that referring to?

AG The Portal is a big triangular canvas hanging above the stage. The goal of the experiment is to open it and allow communication with whatever lies beyond our reality. Do we live inside a simulation? Is our universe only one of an infinite number of universes? Are there alien civilizations out there? I believe the answer to at least one of those is yes. I also believe that science is a very limited tool for answering these questions at the present moment.

AG Are you a good friend of Nick Bostrom?

AG No, we’ve never met, but I have read his book Super Intelligence actually about half of it, and I’m also aware of his simulation hypothesis. Can you explain to the readers about this concept?

AG The simulation hypothesis is the idea that our universe might be a computer simulation. The argument goes that if we assume that future civilizations will be able to create powerful simulations, then it’s likely that many of those simulations will contain civilizations like our own. Therefore, the chances of our universe being the real one are quite high.

AG Yes, it’s a very compelling argument. In the context of this concert, I am going to explore four different hypotheses of what could be awaiting us beyond the Portal. One of those possibilities is that we will find there would be the exterior of the simulation.

AG Because science cannot answer those questions right now, your hypothesis is that science is incapable of answering those questions, and we need a different method to examine other than science.

AG Yes, imagine you’re a mouse in a maze, trying to find its way out. It would probably use what its form
Dietmar Dath

What Kind of Machine is Science Fiction?

Science fiction is a machine that helps us for knowing, forgetting, and learning anew. Science fiction is an imaginative and representing of new knowledge. This provides, however, can only be formalized by suggesting in its form the outlines of the knowledge that would be gained, and the knowledge of those outlines is, after all, knowledge, too. Speculative fiction belongs to those who understand this building principle, who was bequeathed to us by people who noticed that something was wrong with a culture that knew a lot, but didn't want to know how to change to use this knowledge in a humane way—like Hugo Gernsback and Egon Colerus, contradictory people, children of a world they no longer trusted. The machine they created belonged to everyone: one can use it; fortunately, there is no authority that would have to grant us permission to use it. This machine can be used by all those who want to test it for the purpose of knowing, forgetting, and learning anew in their manifold relationships to one another—in other words, so as to not become too abstract here, by all those who can do what, for example, the writer Antje Wagner can do when she ends her novel Hyde (2018) with the words: And before she kissed me, he said, “Don’t be afraid.”

The “she” and the “he” in this sentence designate the same subject, so a grammatical rule of unambiguous gender attribution was forgotten here. For gender assignment itself was not forgotten, and so a new rule becomes possible, a dual one. Hyde is not even a science fiction novel, but one could begin on that final sentence: Whoever can build and understand such sentences, whoever can imagine and represent them well, can use the functional science fiction machine, for example, as a tool and guide reality gender relations (the new, different ones, seen from any number of points of view, can thus be “better” or “worse” than the given ones).

As much as one might feel tempted, speaking in a reality that would be pure reality and thus lacking in possibilities, so dangerous is mere abstract possibility, as in “Everything is possible for everything, even everything that is just somehow conceivable.” In contrast, with every sentence and every image, the stories make up the never-story and, as such, the Nevegebore, delimit them themselves. They get real, sometimes not even possible, but they make a choice. Fiction is something of which at least one person knows the rules. But who invented the fiction interests me less than who the fiction invented. When you figure that out, the question of origin answers itself; it dissolves. It’s a matter of where to, not from where.

This “where to” is not a platitudinous purpose set by a person (which is only needed as a kind of surface tension that holds the work or the context of the work together), but the self-movement of the narrative material between world assertion and world development, starting out from the taciturn point and moving towards another point, which in other abstract doctrines is called the “ideal.” The construction that deals with the variables and invariants of the given and the imaginable, emancipating itself as far as possible from deductive, pedagogical, agitatorial, or otherwise patronizing types (communist or feminist books can still result from it, when these are collateral effects, perhaps even useful and gratifying ones), aims at it. The core of art is not in translation-dependent relationship to reality, but its humanization through its being shaped as a game with variables and invariants, such as, of all beings we know, only human can play. The artistic ideal is not simply identical with a social one—to say the best possible world—but to achieve greatness.

Possible scope for the game. The heaven of art allows it to also create hell and everything that lies between it and the social heaven, even lying quite apart from the shortest route with which one could connect these two. The horizon of speculative fantasy is not that of a sporting event in which those who have learned some utopian or dystopian lesson finish first. It is open, and no one will say wiser and truer things about it than science fiction writer Ursula K. Le Guin. In her beautiful story “An die Musik”—the German title referring to Franz Schubert—we read:

“Good music is nothing. None, Gaye thought, and that is the point. To the world and its states and armies and factories and leaders, music says, ‘You are irrelevant’; and arrogant and gentle as a god, to the suffering man it says only; ‘Listen.’ For being saved is not the point. Music saves nothwithstanding—Merciful, uncaring, it denudes and breaks down all the shelters, the houses men build for themselves, that they may be the sky’s own possible whim, that is a mistake does not mean that nothing can be done with it.”

As much as Gernsback wanted to find science fiction to an objective, the modern scientific, technical world view; it is, all like art, international. In it, subjective communicable views about objective to other subjects. The form of science fiction is an antidote to Platonism, from revolutionary politics to practical dogma. It suspends disbelief in the unreal to look at belief in the real from the side. Where the real is not art, can art reveal it. The game is called knowledge: the prin; the cosmos. It has all time for that. Literally from Joanna Russ to Lenin, there is the most agreement about this among all those From whom Nietzsche has learned something: The sky is not attainable, fictional stories are fictional in order that they not be confused with other, non-narrative, non-aesthetic fields but instead be conveyed with them in the right way, and conveyed further in their analysis, that is, in a lively, productive way. Russ says, “Of course, comment on fiction (her installation) is contingent on ideas, which is content on economics, politics, history—in short, on society,” and she says, “I am certain—often painfully certain—that real experiences are real. They’re far too refractory not to be. The reality I call into question is not that of life but that of fiction, and I do it in such a way that Nabolovsky sometimes does) to emphasize that fiction is fictive, artificial, a communication between persons.”

One time. I can be wrong not only about the objective, but also about the subjective. I may believe that I am in love with a certain person because he or she has very special merits, while in reality I am only in love because I am looking for, finding, needing, the state of being in love, and this person happens to be nearby (again, the fact that it is a mistake does not mean that nothing can be done with it).
Kuurandia is a planet that was born through the Armageddon of Deities. It looks a bit like ancient Earth: All continents are connected by land, and its music is a blend of various cultures. We, Kuunatic, are the shamans on this planet. We wear special shamanic makeup and clothes to perform rituals through sound. On our album *Gate of Klüna*, we explain the early history of Kuurandia:

Sacred bells ring at the dawn of a new era. Our new empress rises with magical refrains. As the planet prospers, Kuurandians hold a ball under the full moon and celebrate the richness of the harvest. The peaceful times seem to last forever ... until a gigantic volcano emerges in the middle of Moonrise Mountains.

Kuunatic chant enigmatic mantras, like prayer, to prevent its eruption. However, unidentified invaders appear from its meandering lava, and the war of predation begins. Kuunatic fight and cast their magical spells, and finally they conquer the enemy in battle. Three pythonesses sing a mystic song in triumph, leading their people to a deep dreamy forest.

Kuunatic is a three-member band with completely different musical and cultural backgrounds. Together, they explore unconventional atmospheric sounds.
Look up, see the greater universe.
Everything is in place, every star, every planet.
Everything is in place but you, planet earth.
You are just like you always were, in your improper place.
Living your improper lives and dying your improper deaths.
Change your time for the unknown factor.
Time passes away, but the unknown is immeasurable and never passes away.
The unknown is eternal because we will never know what it is all about.
Your wisdom will be when you say, “I do not know.”
Your ignorance will be your salvation.
I am the brother of the wind.
I cover the earth and hold it like a ball in my hands.
I can take away others to another galaxy.
I will take you to new worlds.
I will take you to outer unseen worlds.
That are more beautiful than anything earth presents.

Sun Ra*