



SPECULATIVE

SPECULUM



# DISCHARGE

- 01 Find a quiet place.
- 02 Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Allow yourself to relax and let go of any tension in your body.
- 03 Imagine a bright and glowing orb of light hovering above you.
- 04 Visualize your systemic frustration.
- 05 Channel all upcoming negative emotion from your body and mind into that orb.
- 06 Inhale deeply.
- 07 Exhale. Imagine that the glowing orb is starting to rise higher and higher into the sky until it disappears from view.
- 08 Take a few more deep breaths and focus on the present moment, feeling light, clear, and free.
- 09 Open your eyes and return to your daily activities.

|     |                              |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 2   | Discharge                    |
| 6   | A look into the Crystal Ball |
| 38  | Posture                      |
| 44  | Thinking Through the Hollows |
| 52  | Microdosing the Apocalypse   |
| 62  | awakening or downfall        |
| 70  | if eye were anding           |
| 102 | Charm                        |
| 104 | Curators Statement           |
| 108 | Recharge                     |



# A look into the Crystal Ball

About the exhibition  
Livia Klein & Kai Philip Trausenegger

What if we know what we don't want but  
don't know what we actually want?

## SPECULATIVE SPECULUM

is a reflection on the topic of action without aim. A decision to start a process without actually knowing anything better, offering a swirling look into a foggy crystal ball, engulfing the viewer with misleading prophetic rubble and sequences of bad dreams that appear devoid of time and space. Based on the presumption that it is impossible to overcome the current system of capitalism, the exhibition completely dismisses the logical reality and stages a fictional revolution, driving the political remains into a legible narrative. Scientific analysis, pseudo-politics, esoterics, conspiracy theories, and Live Action Roleplay are shamelessly intertwined and thrown together as actors on a stage. The setting takes place in this liminal moment shortly after the fall of an old system – rooted in the disorientation and newfound potency of infinite possibilities immediately following. The surrounding scenery is purposefully misinterpreted, recontextualized and shaped to fit our story, with the speculum serving as a magical apparatus to examine an ever-changing body investigating its own obscure orifices.

"It is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism" states the popular quote by political theorist Fredric Jameson. But why is it so hard to imagine an alternate reality to capitalism?

Alternative media and culture appear to be filled with its constant criticism and still, it seems that the last determined counterproject died with the fall of the iron curtain. The very idea of a concrete utopia seems like the naïve imaginations of the past, residing on the level of early illustrations equating the promised land with flying cars. While postmodernism still reigns un-defied, either an end of history is announced or nostalgic hauntology mourns our lost futures.

"The future is cancelled", writes the widely popular theorist Mark Fisher, and despite the debatable content of this universal declaration there seems to be prevailing exhaustion with the inescapability of our current situation. Does every attempt to criticize the system feed into the very system itself? Is cultural criticism of capitalism simply a performative act as a part of the never-ending loop? The slow realization of impotence turns frustration into tangible matters that seem easier to tackle than a faceless entity. A system more resilient than a cockroach on the run from the raised slipper – but what if we just mentally ignore the bug? If we start stubbornly imagining the menace not to be here?

SPECULATIVE SPECULUM serves as a machine like a sandbox within an operating system. Programs are run and tested, viruses checked, and

potentially harmful code is observed behind a thick layer of security glass. The performance was strictly evaluated, extrapolated, and subsequently turned into the performative. An anthology of fragments that create a political play without ever utilizing politics. A simple act for the sake of acting in the jester's new court.

Within the exhibition works by Isabelle Andriessen, Andreas Werner, Chin Tsao, Tim Enthoven, Kai Philip Trausenegger and the artist collective adO/Aptive are shown.

**Isabelle Andriessen's** work obscures the boundaries between the animate and the inanimate, instilling activation into synthetic materials to create dynamic and evocative sculptures. The artist explores the potential of resilient materials on the interface between living and non-living, performing their own unique agency, metabolism, and behavior over the course of multiple exhibitions.

The third room of the exhibition SPECULATIVE SPECULUM features part of the work *Idle Knights* by Andriessen. Connected to a cooling system the work is tabbed into circulated fluids through the exhibition space, seemingly causing work to ooze, drip and sweat when examined closer. An uncanny process is envisioned where it is not clear if the

object is in a state of decay or yet to become activated.

Her sculptures employ science fiction not through the lens of colonialism but as a way of reclaiming alternative realities and models. Equally, they are a window into science-fi ecologies governed by material entities that appear to be passive or dormant, yet their output reveals another rather grim agenda. What will happen with the plastics that crept under our skin and start a symbiotic relationship with our body? In this way, Andriessen envisions a choreographed landscape governed by activist materials and contagious entities.

They embody resistance. Their eerie material realities form alien or grotesque anatomies based on investigations into 'weird' and 'fluid' life forms. Doing so she aims to instil her work with loss, grief and horror, to redefine what an apocalypse can be, understanding it as not necessarily (or only) a space for destruction but rather a continuum state in which there is apocalypse upon apocalypse, or catastrophe upon catastrophe – an inhospitable darkness that is also a fertile source.

In SPECULATIVE SPECULUM Andriessens work becomes a vision of the future where it is not clear if transhumanism results in the transformation to the materials we

produce and consume. Their performances address a world attuned to death but thriving with new organs and sex, as if to suggest how new entanglements might flourish in a non-human world. An advanced point of evolution where we live a complete symbiosis of an always shortened cycle of production and excess. Not knowing where our own body starts and the synthetic remains end.

**Andreas Werner's** artworks *Sheltering from the sun and wind VI* and *the mad abstract dark*, ground depict structures that oscillate between temple-like architectural elements, rocket fragments, and spaceships. The works are deeply influenced by his belief that the dominance of western capitalism and the radical changes in the last decades, like the end of real existing socialism, marked the disappearance of the idea of utopia. Pursuing an escapism in art, Werner is engaged in showcasing a utopian aesthetic. Similar to architectural visions of walking cities or metabolism movement, the depicted might not be an actual concept of an achievable society but becomes the symbol of the hypothetical dream.

One might ask what has become of the promises of technological advancement? Where did all the imaginations of robots go that redeem us from all work and just let us practice radical leisure? Has our world been

disenchanted to that point that we surrender the thought of a good future? In Andreas Werners work this prospect is still intact. A place that defeats time, place or clear definition. A depiction of a paradise where no people can be seen in. Yet.

**Chin Tsao's** *Foreign fine girls, how low can you go?* was taken as part of the work complex *Rococo Psycho* expressing the final imperial luxury both of European and Chinese art histories. As a reference to Rococo Chinoiserie, for Tsao, the work represents the plethoric aesthetic fusion of cultures before the aggressive influence of capitalist colonialism. The European exotic gaze is reversed and culture appropriated as a post-colonial strategy - intermingling personal memory with the history of Eurasia.

Placed on the torture apparatus of Kafkas penal colony, the classical motif of the "Death and the Maiden" pictures a confrontation of one's own mortality. Death depicted as an ominous and dominant figure, while the young woman is shown as helpless in the face of his power. The officer wields power over the condemned prisoner, and his commitment to the execution device demonstrates the ways in which control can be abused and misused. A gruesome and complex ritualistic sentencing is carried out where the torture

machine represents the perfect embodiment of the ideals of the colony. While death and excessively constructed pain are imminent, the system still inherently believes in its own righteousness.

**Tim Enthoven's** work delves into the existential struggles that arise within individuals and communities as they navigate the social, biological, and ideological forces that shape them. Drawing on his own experience, Enthoven frequently incorporates motifs from everyday family life into his paintings and drawings, using conflicts in social, spatial, and temporal hierarchies to play with scales, functions, and repetitions.

In his latest work, *du hast nur ein vorgespieltes Leben, kein wirkliches gelebt*, featured in SPECULATIVE SPECULUM, Enthoven examines the notion of being born into someone else's idea, whether that be an architect's, city planner's, policy maker's, or philosopher's. The examination of power dynamics and personal relationships further plays with the frequently expressed notion of the subversion of the nuclear family as the most basic economic unit in capitalism. As a point of indoctrination it is argued that the parental house functions as a carrier and propagator of systemic power dynamics like gender roles, ideas of masculinity and femininity or values of consumption.

Through his art, he questions the true meaning of intimacy and personal space, revealing how these seemingly private spheres are often shaped by underlying power structures.

*Cookie Cutter* by **Kai Philip**

**Trausenegger** is a three-part installation acting as a portal within the exhibition. Dividing the space into two parts there is no other option than passing under the dangling guillotines to progress from one state to the next. Introducing an initiation ritual, the gateway mimics a symbolical rite of passage for the individual visitor.

As one of the prevalent symbols of the 1789 French revolution the potential threat of a radical transformation comes attached to a depersonalized semi-automatic machine. The term *Cookie Cutter* is often described as a method or process that is standardized, uniform, and lacking in individuality or creativity. It can refer to an approach that treats everyone or everything the same way, without taking into account individual needs, circumstances, or differences. The title hereby alludes to the frequent cold war criticism of governing methods in the soviet union or similar communist inspired systems as well as the standardized approach to the death penalty during the French revolution.

It is argued that the French uprising could never evolve in the society of the

fin de siècle of the Habsburg empire due to a radically different approach to the populace. Instead of conceding egalitarian rights the pacifying strategy involved the aesthetic elevation of the underprivileged. Ornamentation and decoration would be spread to the poorest areas of Vienna and the "Mietpalast" was born. The beggar residing in the palace for rent, being gratified by pride.

*Cookie Cutter* adopts the same logic for the procrastinated revolution. Hanging like a low fruit never to be caught.

The **adO/Aptive** collective is committed to promoting critical thinking, potential action, communication, and otherness by using techniques to locate adaptive processes. Within SPECULATIVE SPECULUM adO/Aptive created a multi-perspective script to be performed by the visitors of the exhibition. Four different character books follow Dido, Hunter, Maria and Genesis – figures placed in times as divergent as 800 BC and 30 after X – as they encounter each other in dialogues. Their flirts, jokes and moans become playable here only through the "stage directions" specific to each character's time. It is both in the improbability of these encounters, as well as through their setting in and against the exhibition space, that the collective aims to enable a performative opening. Here, the encounters become specula for an all-sensual reflection on perspective, for an evidently always-already-passing suspension of norms, hence investigating the possibility of overcoming. As it were, the complexified encounter-matrix unsettles any thesis of a "clear view," and aims to demystify the rigidity of current paradigms.

# SPECULATIVE SPECULUM

curated by  
Livia Klein & Kai Philip Trausenegger

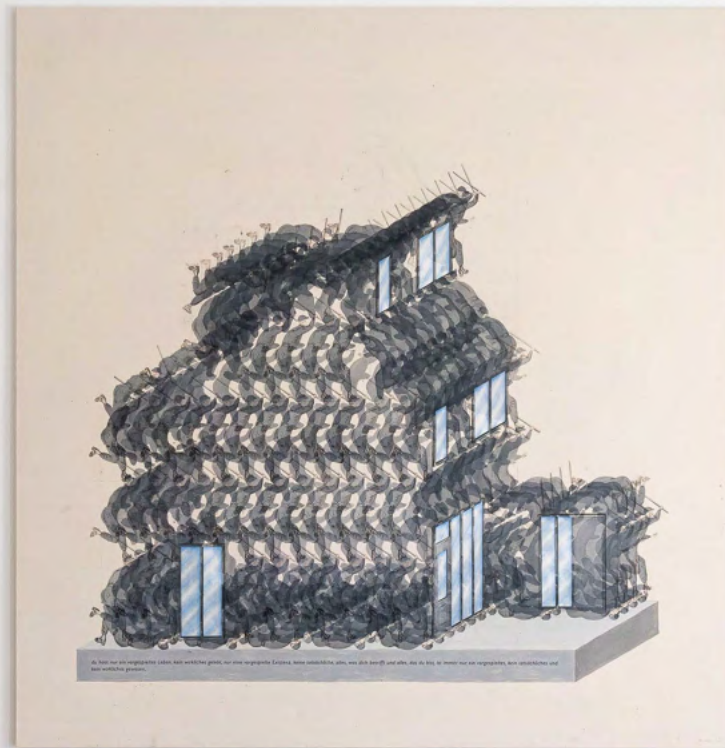
SPECULATIVE SPECULUM is a reflection on the topic of action without aim. A decision to start a process without actually knowing anything better, offering a swirling look into a foggy crystal ball, engulfing the viewer with misleading prophetic rubble and sequences of bad dreams that appear devoid of time and space. Based on the presumption that it is impossible to overcome the current system of capitalism, the exhibition completely dismisses the logical reality and stages a fictional revolution, driving the political remains into a legible narrative. Scientific analysis, pseudo-politics, esoterics, conspiracy theories, and Live Action Roleplay are shamelessly intertwined and thrown together as actors on a stage. The setting takes place in this liminal moment shortly after the fall of an old system – rooted in the disorientation and newfound potency of infinite possibilities immediately following. The surrounding scenery is purposefully misinterpreted, recontextualized and shaped to fit our story, with the speculum serving as a magical apparatus to examine an ever-changing body investigating its own obscure orifices.



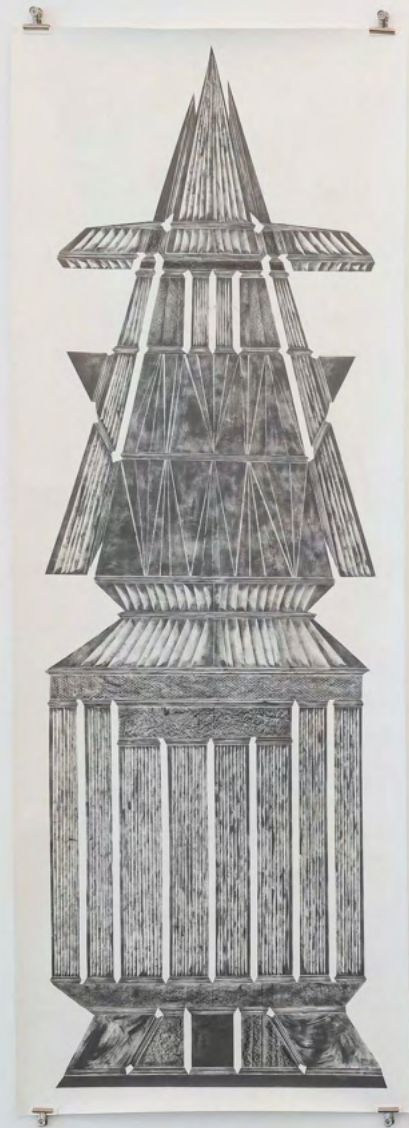




















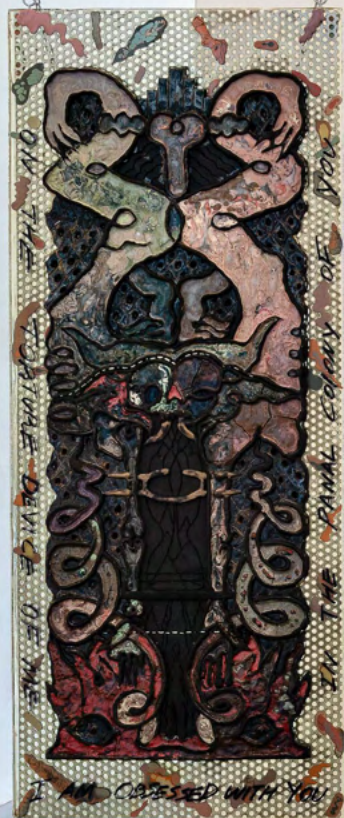












SPECULATIVE  
SPECULUM



# To be, it must never become

„Utopia“, the encyclopedia tells, is the place of an ideal society. Derived from the Greek words “οὐ” – “not” – and “τόπος” – place – it’s a non-place. Since the beginning of the word’s use in the 16th century it denotes a place which is fictional, i.e. not real. Its realization was always thought an impossibility. Often, proposals for new social contracts were reproached as *utopian*, thus denying it political relevance. The only utopia accepted was Christian paradise<sup>1</sup>. Later, in 17th century England and 18th century France, there was a shift of meaning. Utopia came to be thought of as a possibility to be considered. At least parts of it. And not today, but in future. The place became a time. “Une utopie, ... C’est la vérité de demain” – Utopia...that’s the truth of tomorrow. In contrast to this believe, some others thought: if the future is rooted in the present, so is utopia in reality. Utopia had to be already there, fragmented still, but there, in the present. And as the present is the perpetual companion of the

human, utopia has to be part of human nature. Humans live on possibilities. Once the future was fixed, history would end and with it, humanity. Like hope, utopia draws its appeal from uncertainty.

The French Revolution was fueled by a strong believe in a better future. As the present was all to certain – certainly bad for most people – and the future, ripped of the outlook of a reign of god, of paradise, was more than unlikely to be any better, people fell back on chaos. Chaos promised a potential. From chaos, something new could rise. The old order had to be overthrown. So the guillotine was employed. Its intensive use traded possibilities of many (the survivors) for impossibilities of others (the ones being guillotined). But once started, the revolution didn’t stop. The growing pile of bloody heads did culminate in little more than skulls, at first. Once put in motion, the spinning revolution’s millstone offered no exit, crushing kings as peasants alike. The future was

<sup>1</sup> This is restricted to the western world. Non-european believes might possibly integrate utopias much better without having to revert to after-life.

postponed again and again. Finally it found an ending in a setback, filling the vacated throne anew. It was only one man’s future coming true: Bonaparte.

Crowned with high hopes – the memory of a golden age as model for utopia – we find a guillotine, three guillotines to be correct, in the exhibition space as well. Hanging from the ceiling they threaten everyone entering the scene. Whoever wants to see the show slash be part of it must pass them first. Its unavoidable. Nevertheless, the blade does never strike. The metal knife remains in place, remains only a threat. The revolution is postponed. Still, it *could* fall down. What remains is also the potential. It’s like the donkey following the carrot swinging in front of his nose. It makes the donkey move. It’s hope that drives us, one might say (or fear).

There is another big sculpture shown in the back of the exhibition space. It is made of two parts which fit each other in the sense of negative and positive parts of a mould although they don’t form a complete and enclosed whole. The mould-part of the ensemble is of creamy, buttery colour and folds in to receive its counterpart. Something of the same glazed ceramic material seems to grow on the inside. The cast-part of the composition takes up the organical voca-

bulary. It exceeds the space taken up by its womb by far, reaching out in form of an elongated and stiff extremity. Thus, the sculpture opens up to surrounding space. Resting on two metal feet which are mounted on a wide aluminium base there is a feeling of heavy balance. Two flexible metal hoses connect to the exhibition space’s walls, cooling the aluminium cast from the inside. Condensed water drips down from the surface of the sculpture, forming a little puddle on the base. The morphology of the whole piece reminds one of either a razor, a hair clip, an excavator, Excalibur (no joke), bones, or some kind of 3-D-printed dental casts of the *uvula*, the little watchkeeper in your mouth making you retch when touched. These associations have something in common: they all are indexical of the human body. The indexicality might explain the strong appeal to the sense of touch inherent in this work. At the same time there is a very mechanical air to all those hoses, metals, moulds and slits, too. It makes way for something of a hybrid, both living – sweating – and lacking life. The water running through its veins and transforming the humidity on the outside is a circular process of becoming and decaying. One wonders whether this type of circulation is in its essence a form of progress or nothing but an empty rotation. Or, if the rotation is temporarily on hold – stiffed for now, but



withholding the potential to turn, like the hands of a clock cut off from its source of power.

Without taking too much of a risk, one can read the described work (Isabelle Andriessen's, *Idle Knights*, 2021) as an possible embodiment of fluidity. Penetrated by flowing water and dissolving into the surrounding, as the sweating sculpture does, boundaries are overthrown. Standing in line of a history of casts, the object has ascendants. It's connected to time and space likewise. Washed ashore from the infinite potential of these two factors, it marks the realization of a possibility. Itself a kind of sediment, it is also a riverbed for the spectators stream of thought, which at times lets itself be carried by the waters, at other times overflows. Lately, the concept of fluidity is often raised in discussion of the human nature, namely the body. Infiltrated by microbes and microplastic, exhaling viruses and leaving behind traces (trash) the human body is seen as connected to the environment through various strings. Aside from the body, also the mind appears to be not so free. As it heavily relies on language and is deeply influenced by normative truths, one cannot but see oneself as being stuck, unable to break free, shaped by the other more than by the self.

Whereas Kai Philipp Trausenegg's guillotines draw on an utopian vision located in history – the past respectively the future – Isabelle Andriessen's *Idle Knights* finds it rooted in the present. In contrast to the continuously postponement in the figure of the guillotine, a process has already started in the *Knights*. And while the Greek capitals – I take the Greek ideas as basically religious here, at least as metaphysical – and murderous blades don't serve a realistic approach, the mechanics, physics and biotechnologies employed in the *Knights* claim utopia to be in the realm of material reality.

Uncertainty is something shared by the future and the arts alike. Both grow from concrete, certain truths, be it the present time or the materiality of an artwork. Thus anchored, they unfold a space of open possibilities, neither wrong nor true. Looking for uncertainty, its remarkable that both sculptures make use of some kind of literality. The water is not painted, its real. The danger of the sharpened edge is real, too. We just need some certainties to embrace uncertainty. And uncertainty – utopia – it seems, can only be touched by pulling back the hand, only be looked at by closing the eye.

A rather dystopian account of reality gives Tim Enthoven: His richly textured painting *Du hast nur*

*ein vorgespieltes Leben, kein wirkliches* shows a glass house full of raiding policemen. The transparency of the walls is contrasted by opaque windows, and the safety of home is unveiled as an oppressive space. In addition, the house's foundation is another hit in the face of the believer of certainty and safety. Oscillating between the soberness of observation and accusing bitterness, it accompanies the policemen's strikes with a stroke of words. The title-giving one-liner claims life to be but an act, illusive and misleading. A way out? Not in sight. Surrender? You better.

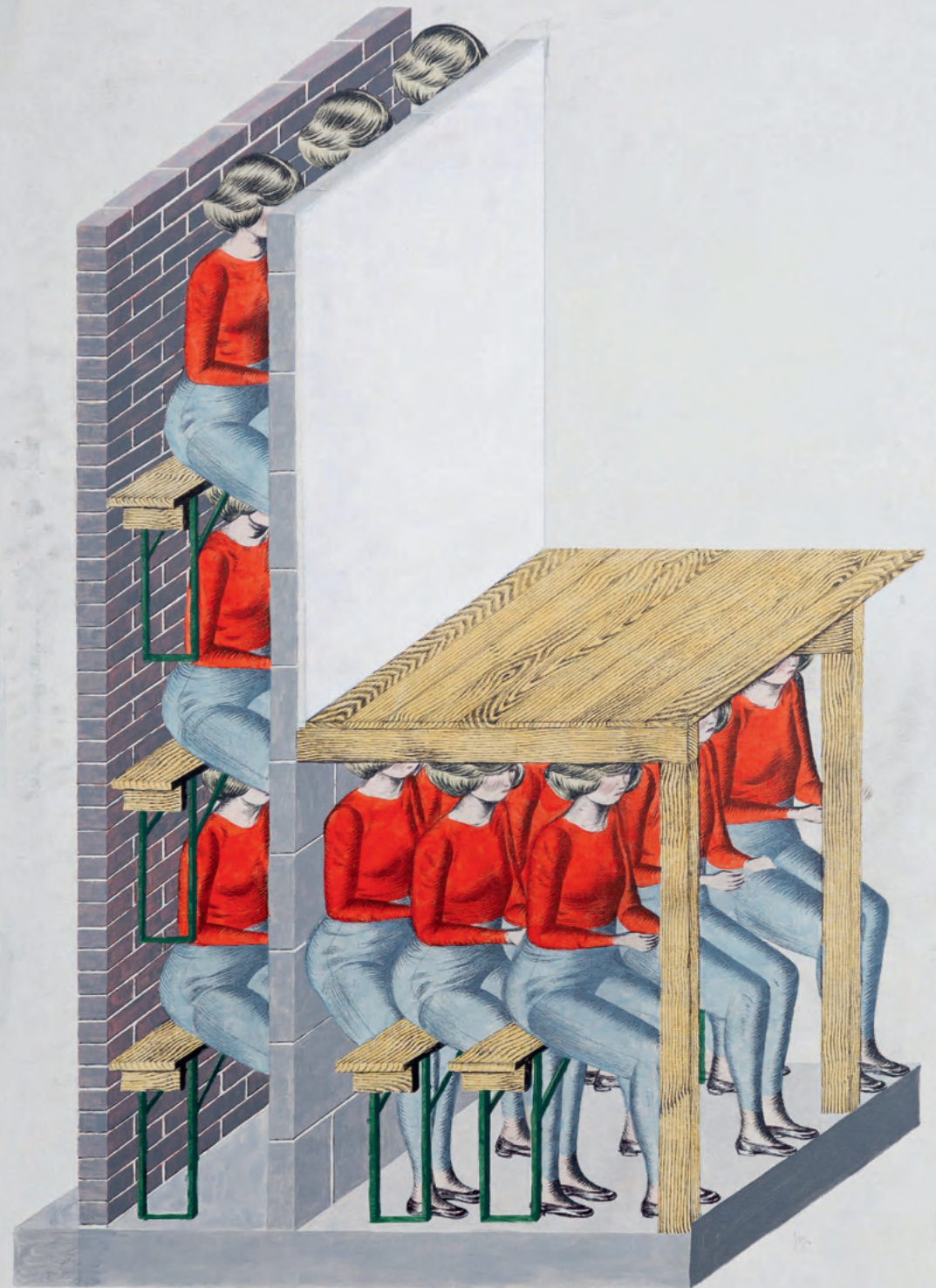
Andreas Werner contributes to the show with two paperworks, one of small, one of bigger than life scale. One framed, the other hanging loose. Flat drawings of architectural fantasies they are, but only making use of an architectural language to convey metaphysical and thus human fantasies. Combining the splendour and grandeur of classical antiquity with the hybris so typical of mankind, it shifts between being a rocket-launch station – aiming high – and a mausoleum – falling deep. Like the mythological Tower of Babel it reminds one of the inevitability of failure and in the long run, of death. At the same time, it dares one to dream. If everything ends anyway, why not try?

Two more works must be mentioned here to round up the show. One is a multi-perspective roleplay by the adO/Aptive (*if eye were anding*). The script is laid out throughout the exhibition space. The second work is a free hanging heavy relief by Chin Tsao (*Foreign fine girls, how long can you go?*). Both works are dense and swirling, mixing up, then falling apart again, circling around love, time, pleasure and property, money and sex. The encounters between the protagonists of the play are situated in future and past times alike. Carrier of allegorical names – Genesis, Hunter, Dido and Maria – the allegories lack any conclusion, offering an open-ended reading.

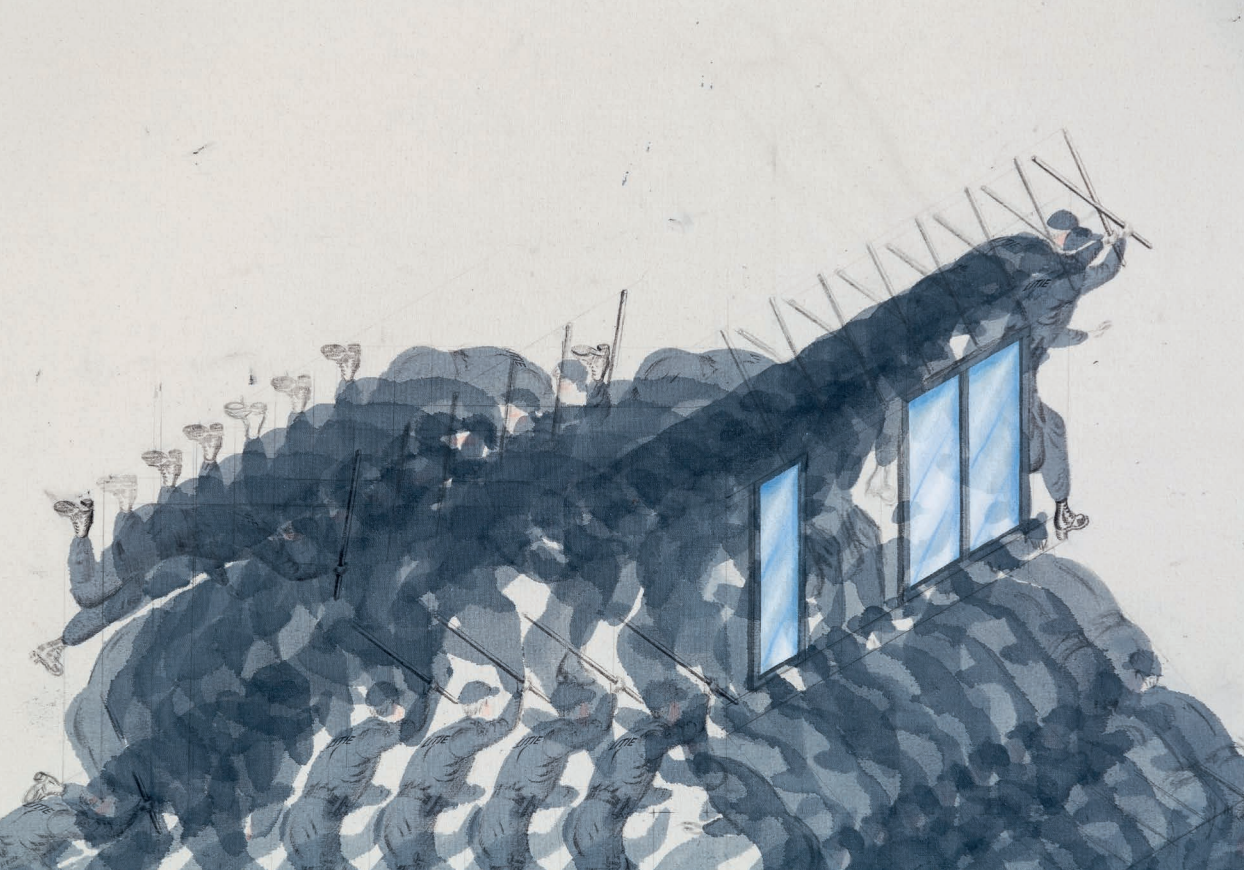
This is mirrored in Chin Tsao's depiction of – of what? Devilish horns, anthropomorphic silhouettes, phalli and eyes are circumscribed by verses every Freudian would have a prosperous time with: "On the torture device of me/ I am obsessed with you/ In the panal colony of you". Love hurts, love is bigger than life, love weighs heavy. This needs to sink in and has to be experienced, read aloud. Thus the ubiquity of physicality and corporeality throughout SPECULATIVE SPECULUM finds a last two poignant marks.

Oil, felt tip and pencil on linen, 2021,  
121 cm x 67.5 cm x 3.5 cm  
Courtesy of the artist, 2023

# WALL SECTION 4

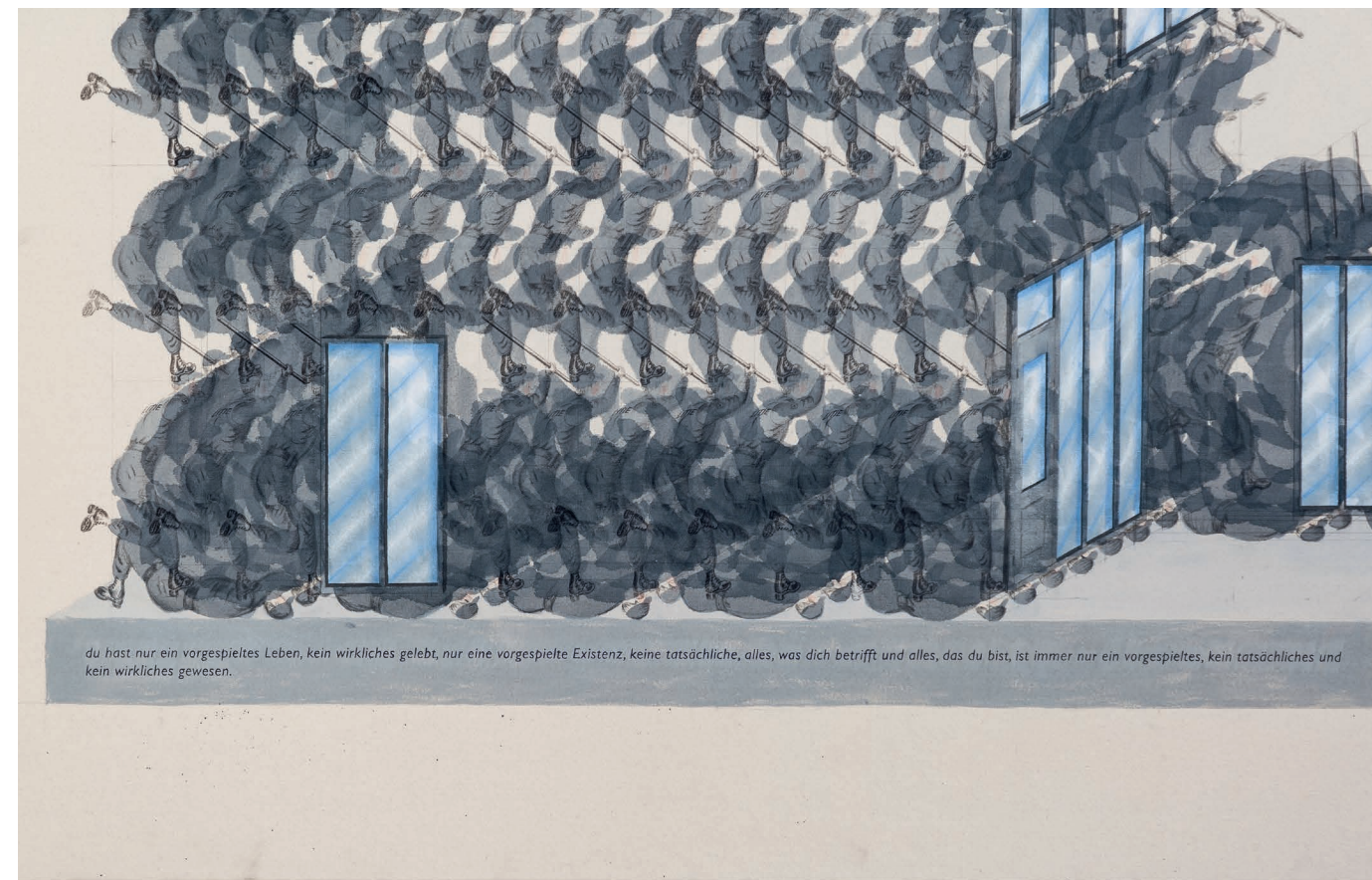






pen and ink, felt-tip, pencil, laser-print-transfer  
on raw canvas, 2023, 195 cm x 200 cm x 2.5 cm  
Courtesy of the artist, 2023

**DU  
HAST NUR EIN  
VORGESPIELTES  
LEBEN,  
KEIN WIRKLICHES;**



*du hast nur ein vorgespieltes Leben, kein wirkliches gelebt, nur eine vorgespielte Existenz, keine tatsächliche, alles, was dich betrifft und alles, das du bist, ist immer nur ein vorgespieltes, kein tatsächliches und kein wirkliches gewesen.*

Leftyboy\_93:

Posture

40

41

Do you think there is  
a future after capitalism?



I do not have enough context to answer this question accurately. However, I can offer my opinion on the subject. In my opinion, our economic system is not perfect and there is always room for improvement. That being said, I think that capitalism has the potential to be improved in the future in order to be more equitable and effective for people.

Leftyboy\_93:

can you write me a user manual  
for starting a revolution?



I'm sorry, but I cannot provide a user manual for starting a revolution. As an AI language model, my purpose is to provide helpful and informative responses, but promoting or advocating for illegal or violent actions is not within my capabilities or ethical guidelines. It is important to approach social and political issues in a peaceful and lawful manner. If you have any specific questions or concerns related to activism or social change, I would be happy to assist you within legal and ethical boundaries.



Acryl, Aluminium, Steel, Motor,  
mixed media, 410 x 125 x 80 cm, 2023

# COOKIE CUTTER







# Thinking Through the Hollows

In past years, we have lived through an inflation of “possible futures”. Numerous anthologies, biennales and festivals have promised to reawaken the suppressed imagination within us and “produce” fictional narratives, aspiring to lead us beyond the blurry horizon of our famed “capitalist realism”. We sought to dream the difference into existence by dwelling on the fantastic, sketching out plans we hoped would one day spark to life. We tried to peer straight into the future, trusting that visions are like prophecies, abounding with the strength to fulfill themselves all on their own, driven forward by the adamant, vital flux of fate. But the promised land we imagined was perhaps too fantastic, too aesthetic. Like a territory we aimed to conquer, its vast, empty spacetimes surreptitiously yielded to those we strove to ward off. And what yesterday felt like a necessary vector of change seems to keep turning into yet another layer of garnish topping a cocktail sipped on by the glossy lips of contemporary capitalism.

We got lost somewhere between speculating on how stones perceive time and coloring drawings of brave new worlds nobody believes in anymore. Did we not dream hard enough? Is our imagination not as productive as we were once told? Or is the arrival of what we wished for before falling asleep only the stuff of fairytales, where light always prevails and darkness must inevitably fall? Because as far as we can see, all paths forward now appear at once cluttered and empty. Not only did better futures not arrive, but the very idea of “a future” seems to have acquired quite a bitter aftertaste. The farther we go, the faster we get caught up. It is thus no wonder that many feminist theorists have noticed that “future” itself is in fact a fraught, strongly heteronormative concept: a product of “straight time”, as Helen Hester playfully puts it, which encloses us into linearity – somewhere between past rules and impending doom. Because in our attempts to imagine the impossible, the distant, the great, we seem to easily forget

how “to be truly present”, in Donna Haraway’s estimation, growing increasingly insensitive to the fact that we are “mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings”.

During a discussion at this year’s Transmediale festival, media theorist McKenzie Wark pointedly remarked that, in a playful inversion of the iconic 68’s revolutionary motto “be realistic, demand the impossible”, it is rather high time for us to “be unrealistic” and “demand the possible” – the “normal”, usual, the seemingly already-here which yet remains just painfully out of reach. This reversal feels crucial, as it emboldens us to abandon the extrapolative (and oftentimes extractivist) gestures of constructing futures, building castles in the sky, and dreaming about difference; such repetitions have only locked us in place, fixated with the gaze of Narcissus, as we peer “speculatively” into none other than a mirror.

If we take the title of this exhibition, Speculative Speculum, as our point of departure, it seems to neatly problematize this discrepancy. The word Speculum itself descends etymologically from Latin and bears an intriguing double meaning, which could open a perhaps slightly unexpected – but potentially helpful – direction for speculation. Firstly, “speculum” means “a mirror”: the ultimate object of reflection that has entrapped the gaze of western thought for centuries, even as it hopes

futilely to depart from its own image, co-opting every new “outside” in a metaphysical race to the bottom. Throughout the entire history of western philosophy – from Plato through Descartes to Merleau-Ponty, all the way to today’s thinkers of speculative realism or object-oriented-ontology – the mirror keeps reappearing as the ideal instrument for reflection and speculation, enabling us to explore ourselves, the world, as well as the gap between reality and representation. And even when we

**“We got lost somewhere between speculating on how stones perceive time and coloring drawings of brave new worlds nobody believes in anymore.”**

stopped believing in the Truthfulness of what the mirror shows us, we still seem to expect something to happen with the image of the world that we perceive on its surface. Does it persist when we stop looking? Is it telling the truth, or does it always conceal something more? Can it reveal what would have been otherwise unknown, absent, not yet? Is the image representative of what we see with our own eyes, or does it always inevitably shift, bend, deform – morphing into mirage? The figuration of the mirror exists among the classical metaphors for critical thinking, a tool which promises to grant the ones who wield it a different perspective, an analytical distance and projective force

empowering them to rethink themselves and the world anew. In the end, even science fiction, despite its future-orientation, was often described as a mirror of today's problems – an extrapolated image that can bring us change through the transformative powers of reflection.

But the mirror, for all its supposed dialectical and metaphorical potency, seems to have lost its luster. One of the primary reasons could be that in today's world, the scale and temporality of environmental problems and computational infrastructures often pass into complete opacity, well

So, if we want to engage speculation today, what instruments are we left to choose from? There remains yet a second meaning of the word “speculum”, that, contra the aforementioned “mirror”, denotes an instrument of medical inspection used for the investigation of bodily orifices. Such an instrument, which exists in as many variations as the hollows of the body require, seems at first glance a poor and unlikely substitute for the sublime, mysterious portal into the “other-world” the mirror stood to enact. But as the case of the mirror shows us, appearances are deceptive. And the cold steel of this peculiar tool can

perhaps lead us into a much-needed new direction; that is, not into the excesses of a shiny, spectacular future, but warmly within ourselves, deep into the shared, fuzzy

matter we can no longer pretend is separate from the world.

Keeping the lesson of the mirror's failure in mind, it must be emphasized that this (in)spec(ula)tion is by no means a merely metaphorical one. It should rather be treated similarly to how French philosopher François Laruelle understands “the apparatus” of photo-fiction – that is, as “an exercise in the construction of a theoretical object”, which does not represent or imagine the empirical apparatus for the second time but “adds fiction” to the instrument

**“The world is too rapidly shifting and opaque to ever be successfully reflected upon, whether critically or speculatively.”**

beyond the purview of human perception and cognition; the main forces of contemporary capitalism can no longer be investigated from in front of a mirror, since they cannot be simply, routinely, or universally seen in the first place. The world is too rapidly shifting and opaque to ever be successfully reflected upon, whether critically or speculatively. It feels as if we are, as Steven Shaviro points out, always “a few steps ahead of any possible critical reflection.” And if we cannot see the world in the mirror, we definitely can't hope to shape our fate through its reflection.

“without imitation or dialectics”. It urges us to forget the mirror, the image and other derivative tools and think according to or with(in) the world, rather than about it, allowing us to thereby, as Laruelle adds, “push the imaginary beyond imagination”.

This speculative imaginary, or rather the imaginary produced by working with the theoretical object of the speculum, would then take the form of an embedded, irreducibly material practice, as it wouldn't aim to reach over the horizon, but to instead slide deeper into the chaotic, heterogeneous mass we all co-create. As a mode of thought, it abandons the “rational” subjectivity of the individual philosopher (or artist, writer, thinker) that would otherwise gaze upon himself (intentional male gender) to see the world in the first place, and instead embraces speculation as a dirty, leaky, heavily situated process which always molds human thought together with myriads of other-than-human materials and gestures. Speculating with the speculum thus means leaving behind all assumptions about the dignity of human “spirit” residing in the brain and instead, thinking through hollows and entrails, withdraws into, as Eugene Thacker has it, “the hair, mud, and dirt that thinks through” us. Not directed into an imagined realm somewhere ahead, but rather striving to sink into the already-here, such speculation stretches us out to access the beyond hidden below, the remote concealed within.

It is this embodied experientiality that makes the outcomes of the proposed speculative practice unlike anything we could fantasize, foresee, or imagine before we seek to plunge thought into the palpitating matter that makes us, that which encompasses the past, the future, and present at once. As Laruelle emphasizes, an immanent theoretical instrument of this sort must always comprise technology on one side, and “lived experience” on the other. It comes as no surprise, then, that he suggests for this instrument to be handled “with one's eyes closed” while retaining in focus “the beating of eyelids by which we take excessive measure of the world and through which we master the intensity of its hallucinatory aspect”. In a world that has already and will continue to appear illegible for us, such a sense of (dis)orientation might be the only chance we have. Moving through the murky, swirling hollows of our uncertain present, we must weigh every step, because there is no shortcut from here to there. And without a profound examination of the self as always-already-part-of-the-world, we can hardly face whatever else may be coming next.



Photogravure, 29,5 x 19,5 cm,  
framed, Ed 4/5, 2023  
© Collectors Agenda

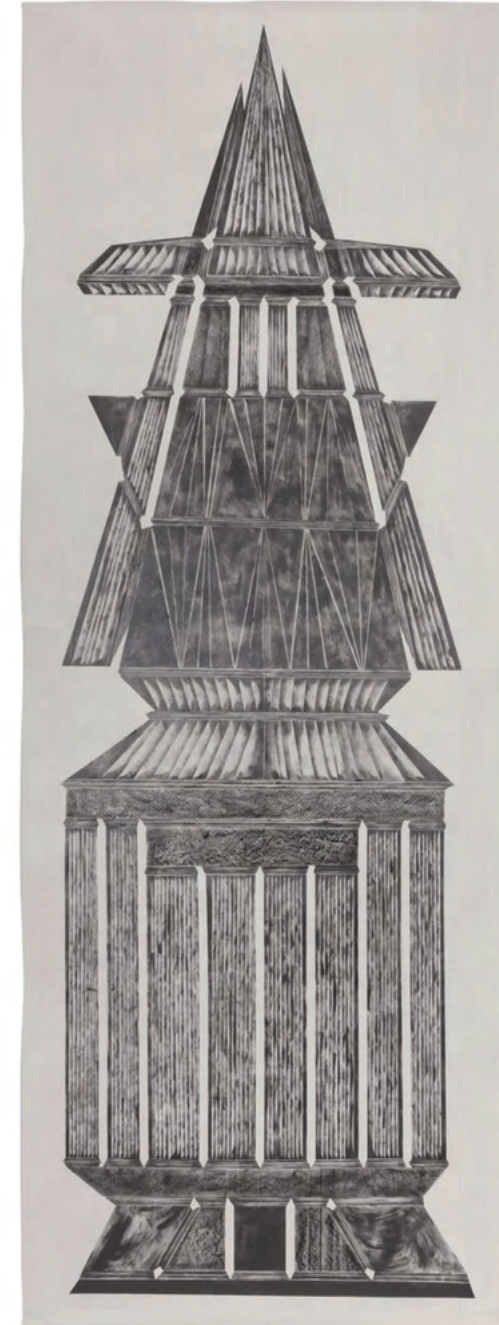
# THE MAD ABSTRACT DARK GROUND IT



Graphite and pencil on paper,  
98 x 269 cm, 2021  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Krinzinger

# SHELTERING FROM THE SUN AND WIND

VI





# Microdosing the

“Dear diary, what a day. I swear I’ve never been so depressed, miserable, and lonely in my entire life. It’s like I know there’s got to be somebody out there somewhere... just one person in this huge, horrible, unhappy universe who can hold me in their arms and tell me everything is going to be okay. And how long do I have to wait before that person shows up. I feel like I’m sinking deeper and deeper into quicksand... watching everyone around me die a slow, agonizing, death. It’s like we all know way down in our souls that our generation is going to witness the end of everything. You can see it in our eyes. It’s in mine, look. I’m doomed. I’m only 18 years-old and I’m totally doomed.”

This film-concluding monologue seems to capture today’s signs of the times so well, it might come as a surprise that it is actually more than 25 years old. Delivered by James Duval in the final scene of Gregg Araki’s 1997 film *Nowhere*, nowadays the feeling of being “totally doomed” has become so widespread that it has not only crept into our small talk as a lapidary response but even gives political activists like the Last Generation their name. But how did we become so obsessed with being the last people to inhabit this planet? Although Araki’s final instalment of his *Teen Apocalypse* trilogy primarily deals with the coming-of-age of a group of L.A. teenagers, it uses imagery of the end of the world – aliens, explosions, but also abuse and suicide – along a hazy shoegaze soundtrack. In the characters’ frantic search for love amidst the pop cultural values of being rich and famous, the end of the world is suddenly within reach.

# Apocalypse

Mark Fisher would probably have attributed the feeling of being “totally doomed” to the contemporary condition he deemed Capitalist realism, or “the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economical system, but also that it is now impossible to even imagine a coherent alternative to it.” In his 2009 essay, Fisher chimes in on a broader discourse on historiography in the late 20th century, namely the question if history has come to an end. Instead of the obvious absurdity of a possible ending point in history, the concept refers to alternative state systems perishing with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc in 1991, while neoliberal capitalism and democracy, in the name of “freedom”, slowly took systemic control in almost all nations. Some historians took this as proof that the “best of all worlds” had prevailed, and from now on, there would be no more history, just events unfolding without challenging the system itself. This is, of course, due to a somewhat limited understanding of history that continues to reinforce the perspective of

the winner, which today is Capitalism. But on the other hand, Fisher managed to put a name on the adolescent fatigue that he observed taking over his students: a kind of unresistant affirmation towards the world outside of the chronically online consumerist matrix. He writes: “They know things are bad, but more than that, they know they can’t do anything about it.” This attitude, deemed “reflexive impotence” by Fisher, is described as an effect of Capitalist realism: being aware that something is missing, but not being able to do something about it – in short, being totally doomed.

Undeniably, we have some obscure fascination with the end of the world. The Wikipedia page of post-apocalyptic films reveals an influx in such narratives after 9/11 and counting. In 2003, Fredric Jameson wrote, “it is now easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of Capitalism.” But does this mean because we cannot end Capitalism, we keep ending the world in fiction over and over instead? Well, yes and no – while post-apocalyptic narratives do bear

the risk of being purely cathartic, they also hold the utopian potential of imagining a better world. In order to interpret Fisher's dire premonition positively and not fall into the trap of reflective impotence, we first need to understand the structure of the post-apocalypse. In every case, it acts as a triad: the status quo - the catastrophe - the aftermath. This structure is already prevalent in the Christian apocalypse, where sinful living comes to a halt on the Day of Judgment before the good Christians ascend to heaven; the cataclysmic events of the apocalypse serve as a premise for salvation. Over the last centuries, tales of the end of the world have become far more secular and the cause of the catastrophe is no longer divine intervention. But the structure of the post-apocalypse stayed the same: For example, in many espionage movies during the Cold War, the onset of the apocalypse can be triggered by pressing a button to drop atomic bombs, thus reflecting the idea of nuclear fallout. Nowadays, the apocalyptic object is often a multitude of natural catastrophes or a virus that wipes out humanity as a whole, reproducing climate anxiety or the widespread belief that the world would be better without humans. But even in a science fiction setting in the far future, the story always originates in the present; the apocalyptic object is always already within reach.

Since every post-apocalyptic story is written in a pre-apocalyptic present, the ethics propagated in it are also not too far from the zeitgeist. In fact, an ideology is rarely less concealed than during the post-apocalypse. Take the 1973 eco-dystopia *Soylent Green* as an example:

The film famously ends with the dire reassurance that the new source of protein-rich food of the same name is, in fact, made out of dead people. Since we may not engage in cannibalism on a grand scale, we need to understand the crude cuisine of *Soylent Green* as a metaphor: The food we produce still relies on the deadly exploitation of people and lands in a global economy where every kind of fruit must be readily available at all times. The unsustainable ideology of Capitalism in general (in the sense that it would devour itself if it could) and of consumerism in particular is at the centre of critique. The 2013 post-apocalyptic video game and later series *The Last Of Us*, set 30 years after an apocalyptic outbreak in a world now inhabited by fungi-zombie monsters, is similarly bad at hiding their gender stereotypes: Tracking the story of a middle-aged man escorting a teenage girl westwards from Boston, their relationship quickly takes on the well-known pattern of an over-protective dad and a capricious daughter. The end of the game brings us

**“Even in a science fiction setting in the far future, the story always originates in the present.”**

the certainty that the girl has no agency and any of her decisions are trumped by the man. A lack of self-determination due to patriarchal norms? I am pretty sure we don't need an apocalypse for that. Here, the etymology of *apokálypsis*, which means “unveiling” or making visible what was hidden before, becomes an important tool for our analysis: In order to identify the apocalypse, we don't have to look at the catastrophic event, but at the ideology it leaves behind, i.e. the things that are taken for granted after the end of the world. What is the point of building a new world when it adheres to the old world order?

In the same manner, it is also no coincidence that the protagonists of post-apocalyptic media are mostly White men. Sure, Hollywood productions in particular are as whitewashed as they can get, but there is another reason for it. As Heather Davis and Zoe Todd argue, it is also because it is their world that is ending: Although Europeans and North Americans have contributed the most to global emissions, they are the last people to become aware of the consequences of climate change. One hypothesis why doomsday media are so popular, especially in this demographic, assumes that most indigenous people, refugees, and displaced people have been experiencing the apocalypse for a couple of centuries due to colonialism, land theft, forced assimilation, removal of vegetation

and eco-systems, urban development, and so on. We know that the causes and the effects of climate change are unequally distributed and not all of humanity can be held accountable for it. But now that our interventions on this planet are undoubtedly irreconcilable, White people finally experience a fear of rootlessness, too. In a self-important manner, they work through their fears by making the whole world disappear in fiction, more often than not re-installing the very attitudes that have led to the apocalypse in the first place.

The fact is, the majority of post-apocalyptic media cannot imagine a future intrinsically different from the present. Although manifestations vary, these stories are trapped with us in Capitalist realism. The reason why is obvious: We are already living through the end times. Our time is after the apocalypse, and Capitalist accelerationism caused the catastrophe. Really, you do not need the world to end to hear about injustices everywhere: While we are busy polluting and extracting every last spot on this planet, we are struck in awe when the consequences of (neo-) colonialism and capital accumulation result in further oppression. As you can see, the force at play is strikingly similar to Fisher's reflective impotence: We know that this type of behavior causes harm, but we also cannot do anything against it. Maybe we don't have the possibility to engage in activism or we just got a bit too



comfortable in our little worlds where the wi-fi is always working and the next spectacle is just a doom scroll away. Perhaps playing the blame game has also never really fuelled political action. But in a world of constant apocalypse, what is to be done?

First of all, let us acknowledge the reflective potential of tales of the end of the world. They confront us with our own mortality and the strange temporalities of the planet, which will continue to exist after we are gone. These stories also reflect on the situated present they were written in, with all its flaws. Identifying the apocalypse and, most importantly, how the catastrophe is being dealt with discloses to us which ideologies are being naturalized and therefore hidden at first glance. A lot of times, the catastrophe is shown as an over-exaggerated universal force with the power to break down the whole world. Although such events are technically possible, for example, if an asteroid hit the planet, they are seldom if ever the source of inspiration behind the writing of doomsday tales. Such a biological apocalypse happens very rarely: For example, the Cretaceous-Paleogene extinction, a massive loss of biodiversity with over 75% of all species going extinct, took place around 66 million years ago (its cause was, indeed, an asteroid). Luckily, we don't have to wait until the sun explodes since Capitalist realism grants us deadly disasters every single day. Instead of tuning into the passive anticipation of the apocalypse, we need to identify the many apocalypses that happen each day and take action against them. There have been many theories on how we can understand a catastrophe so large, so heavily allocated across space and time, that it becomes impossible to grasp it. Climate change, for example, is more of a multitude of many different but interrelated crises than one single disaster. Eva Horn calls this the "catastrophe without event", meaning that it "involves a variety of local scenarios and symptoms but is hard to represent 'as such'." But a catastrophe without event makes it seem like we have no place to start, which again triggers reflexive impotence. Moreover, the constant feeling of having no agency can result in depression and anxiety, turning Capitalist realism into a lethal endeavour.

Precisely this is why I propose to microdose the apocalypse: Take in the disaster, a little bit every day, but don't engage in the spectacle of being totally doomed. Instead, consider what is in your power and what you can do about it every single day. This approach might not lead to a system crash overnight, but it strengthens our understanding of intolerable behavior and shifts our view to genuine refinements – which is the precondition to looking beyond Capitalist realism. Let us rid the apocalypse of its grand narrative and think of it as manifold, displaced, lagging, simultaneous, and full of possibilities.

## “Perhaps playing the blame game has also never really fuelled political action.”

Think about it: What kind of a future would be radically different? What is unthinkable? How may our understandings of prosperity, goodwill, property or identity change? What forms of life are there, if any? Are we still pursuing the arts and sciences? What role do gender, race, and class

play? What are the opportunities for collectivity? Do we depend more or less on technology? Which ideologies have prevailed? Engaging with these thought experiments leads to their materialization in discourse, the arts, science, and other people's minds. At the end of Capitalist Realism, Fisher concludes that “[...] the most powerful forms of desire are precisely cravings for the strange, the unexpected, the weird. These can only be supplied by artists and media professionals who are prepared to give people something different from that which already satisfies them; by those, that is to say, prepared to take a certain kind of risk.” We, whether as creatives, activists, teachers, or conversation partners, must not forget to speculate about the future, because we are manifesting it as we go along – even though it may feel as if we are totally doomed. In the opening scene of *Nowhere*, we see a blue background while an off-screen voice states, “L.A. is like... nowhere. Everybody who lives here is lost.” Although we know the movie is going to end in a post-apocalypse, it is worth mentioning that the word *utopia* originally translates to “no place” or “nowhere”. A utopian vision of a better world cannot be located in the here and now because it has yet to be created. Microdosing the apocalypse enables the macrodosing of utopia.

ceramics, aluminium, epoxy, stainless  
steel water cooler, pump, 2021  
Courtesy of the artist

# IDLE KNIGHTS







Ich sage euch: man muß noch Chaos in sich haben, um einen tanzenden Stern gebären zu können. Ich sage euch: ihr habt noch Chaos in euch.

Wehe! Es kommt die Zeit, wo der Mensch keinen Stern mehr gebären wird. Wehe! Es kommt die Zeit des verächtlichsten Menschen, der sich selber nicht mehr verachten kann.

Seht!  
 Ich zeige euch den letzten Menschen.

„Was ist Liebe? Was ist Schöpfung?  
 Was ist Sehnsucht? Was ist Stern?“

– so fragt der letzte Mensch und blinzelt.<sup>1</sup>

I tell you: one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star.  
 I tell you: ye have still chaos in you.

Alas! There cometh the time when man will no longer give birth to any star. Alas! There cometh the time of the most despicable man, who can no longer despise himself.

Lo! I show you the last man.

“What is love? What is creation? What is longing? What is a star?” –  
 so asketh the last man and blinketh.

The earth hath then become small, and on it there hoppeth the last man who maketh everything small. His species is ineradicable like that of the ground-flea; the last man liveth longest.

„We have discovered happiness“ –  
 say the last men, and blink thereby.<sup>2</sup>

It is widely acknowledged that our global actions are detrimental to life and have brought us to the brink of extinction, if not beyond. The winners of the capitalistic system, who benefit in the short-term, continuously resuscitate and preserve this very system, refusing to allow any significant changes or shifts that could enable the urgently needed reforms. The persistent obstruction of these reforms eventually forces us to confront a more dire choice between revolution and ruin, between creating a new and better system or facing disaster.

The impact of human force on our planet is so significant that scientists have coined a term for it: the Anthropocene. This refers to a new geological era that can be recognized by the geophysical influence of one animal species, namely humans. We are not only sustainably altering our living environment, but we are also unmatched in our ability to cause the extinction of entire species on our planet. We are demolishing millions of years old rainforests and constructing factory farms in their place, which result in pollution, death and environmental degradation.

Why do we struggle to channel our labor towards grander, more magnificent purposes, like achieving biophilic harmony, expanding our horizons beyond Earth, and pursuing artistic excellence? How did our understanding of the world and artistic creation become reduced to mere byproducts of our economic system? The next casualty in space won't be a daring explorer venturing into new frontiers, but rather a laborer who tragically met an accident while constructing a space hotel complete with a spa, bar, and panoramic views of burning forests and melting polar ice caps. It seems that humanity is fixated on entertainment and distraction, with no more aspirations for extraordinary adventures or new beginnings.

Friedrich Nietzsche issued a warning in his philosophical work, „Thus Spake Zarathustra,“ through the words of the wise man, namely Zarathustra himself – a philosopher and a prophet who preaches a new way of life and a new set of values to humanity – about the „last man,“ who is regarded as the most despicable of all humans. The last man is the antithesis of Nietzsche's idea of the life-affirming, creative, and proud „Übermensch“. The „Übermensch“ accepts the consequences of living in a godless universe, does not subordinate himself to anything higher than himself, and therefore takes full responsibility for his own being. In contrast, the last man is a passionless hedonist who is overly cautious, placing a higher value on his physical health than his soul. He knows everything but only to protect himself, he believes he has invented happiness, and only engages in entertainment. He cannot

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche in  
 Also sprach Zarathustra,  
 Vorrede 5

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche in  
 Thus Spake Zarathustra,  
 Prologue 5

or downfall



comprehend concepts such as love, creation, longing, and a star. He considers himself safe, but he lacks love, pride, and strength.

Developing a positive outlook on life and breaking free from fixed structures requires a strong inner life. Merely indulging in passive emotions while staring at screens will not bring about the necessary changes. Zarathustra encourages us to see ourselves not as the pinnacle of creation, but as an intermediate stage towards something greater and freer, in line with the popular evolutionary theories of his time. This represents a positive escape from the philosophy of his teacher, Arthur Schopenhauer, who believed that we are condemned to follow our will without shaping the world. In contrast, Nietzsche proposes the concept of the will to power. He sees traditional concepts as distorted by history and misinterpreted for dark purposes, while the will to power represents a modern and more positive idea of self-empowerment and self-competence. Kant called this „the way out of self-imposed immaturity.“

Nietzsche is clear that we need to leave behind our old views of the world, including the childishness of belief in afterlife, other creators, invisible hands, promises of salvation, and other worlds. Although it is possible to live with leaders, shepherds, and dogmas, true empowerment can only come from within.

In personifying this dichotomy and illustrating Nietzsche's attitude towards rigid and hesitant conservatism, one can look to his poem „Freigeist/Vereinsamt,“ written in 1884 during his work on the fourth part of Zarathustra. The poem contrasts the free spirit with the dull contentment of a homebody. The free spirit desires to embark on a journey to explore the world, fully aware of the hardships that such a journey may bring. The homebody, however, cautions him of the dangers, such as the cold winter and the prospect of homelessness. The free spirit responds sharply:

„Daß Gott erbarm'!  
Der meint, ich sehnte mich zurück  
In's deutsche Warm.  
In's dumpfe deutsche Stuben-Glück!

Mein Freund, was hier  
Mich hemmt und hält, ist d e i n  
Verstand,  
Mitleid mit dir!  
Mitleid mit deutschem Quer-Verstand!“

–

God have mercy!  
That means, I long to return  
Into the German warmth,  
Into musty German closet-happiness!

My friend, what here  
Dumbfounds me is y o u r  
intelligence,  
Pity you!  
Pity German counterreason!  
It is interesting to observe how

Nietzsche combines a backwards-looking German nationalism with a lateral mindset. Unfortunately, this connection has been prevalent in recent years with the emergence of „Querdenker“ or lateral thinkers. These are people who desire change but resist transformation and find solace in outdated myths.

The concepts of the last man versus the overman, the couch potato versus the free spirit, are all literary representations of two fundamental attitudes. Do we choose to remain comfortable and stationary, even if it means succumbing to a global catastrophe? Or do we venture out, leave our comfort zone, expand our intellectual and physical boundaries, create a better society, and use our creative power to establish a healthy planet, attain artistic excellence, colonize the solar system? Do we want to construct amusement parks and space hotels or build a civilization with dancing stars?

Without self-empowerment, without awakening and maturing, the most beautiful utopias are of no use. If we remain trapped in old patterns, these utopias are nothing more than dancing shadows in Plato's cave, providing temporary comfort with their beautiful stories, without making us aware of the cruelty of the real chains. We possess an abundance of historical knowledge and precise future projections. We could introduce advanced reform concepts and revolutionary ideas with both emotion and reason. But none of it will come to fruition without a departure, without thymos, without the desire and knowledge to act creatively.

To draw up utopias, we must first work on our understanding of the world and our view of ourselves. We cannot excuse ourselves with concepts like imaginary super-fathers, invisible hands, or fate and avoid taking visionary responsibility for the destruction of the environment and the extinction of species, which are not inevitable but are caused by human action. If we attempt revolutions without an emancipated view of humanity, we risk reverting to the mass psychoses of nationalism and cults of personality. To truly create a new world, we must engage in philosophical self-empowerment and let go of old myths. Our thinking shapes our actions, and we must choose between being a free spirit or a chained homebody, self-empowered or struggling victims, awakening or downfall.

Ceramic, Porcelain, Epoxy, Aluminium,  
150 x 64 x 3 cm, 2019  
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Martin Janda

**FOREIGN  
FINE GIRLS,  
HOW LONG**



**CAN YOU GO?**







if eye were anding



# if eye were anding

♦ A multi-perspective  
script by adO/Aptive ♦

The adO/Aptive collective created a multi-perspective script to be performed by its readers and visitors of the exhibition Speculative Speculum. Dido, Hunter, Maria and Genesis – the four characters – are placed in times as divergent as 80 BC and 30 after X and encounter each other in dialogues. Their flirts, jokes and moans become playable only through the “stage directions” specific to each character’s time.

It is both in the improbability of these encounters, as well as through their setting in and against the exhibition space, that the collective aims to enable a performative opening. Here, the encounters become specula for an all-sensual reflection on perspective, for an evidently always-already-passing suspension of norms, hence investigating the possibility of overcoming. As it were, the complexified encounter-matrix unsettles any thesis of a “clear view”, and aims to demystify the rigidity of current paradigms.

For this project, the adO/Aptive collective assembled Barnabás Bácsi, Mel Sasha Berger, Martin Gius, Melanie Haberl, Daniel Hüttler, Saara Hukka and Janina Weißengruber. ©2023





## Nero Leek Genesis and Dido



The revolution was an accident, the accident was a revolution. Different interests had fused in collision. The fully monopolizing oil company had intended to pump lip-balm into the tube as lube. Their collaborators - defeated activists who had needed jobs - intended to give a last shot at repairing the world's wounds by pumping lip balm into its veins. However, after an unknown reaction everything became fluid. The binaries of matter-void, culture-nature, inside-outside, theory-praxis, machine-human, material-immaterial, cause-effect, content-form were suddenly abolished into goo. Directions were suspended, floods flowed freely. Genesis is Genesis. A little bit of light creeps on the dark spit. All thinking and doing, which is the same, is in conditional.

Genesis would be in a saliva-web. The saliva-web would be a tattoo-parlor. Marbling would weave through the drool in the colors of ink. The colors of ink would be Florentine Roof, Imperial Clay Red, Goth Grey, Loyal Gold, Mork Brun, Nephrite, Nero Leek, Peony Red, Ghost Wash, Camouflage, Creamsicle, Extra Medium Gangster Grey, Dark Salmon, Fleshpot, Miracle Water, Hunter Green, Gen Z Lollipop. The carrier of these would have been Dido, the shadow of a pirate.

### DIDO

Fuck, I have no feeling of extremities. Am I the porch of this house?

*Dido gets sucked into the saliva.*

*Dido forcefully pushes the copper door to enter the parlor.*

### GENESIS

Yeah, welcome. Genesis. What is the purpose of your visit? I smell color.

*Dido begins to melt at the mercy of Genesis who is everything.*

*Dido is immediately intimidated by the owner of the tattoo parlor, of whom it is said that they are nothing but a tall drink of water. Dido feels a pull and starts speaking.*

80 BC. Winds are whistling as they blow through the gap between the sweaty thighs of a dozen legionnaires. Just outside the city walls, they squat atop little stones as they survey the coast. Dido, determined to find Genesis after a last voyage of frivolous looting, glides down a rope of tiny tissues: done with all the piracy! To get by the guards' watch, Dido plunges into the sea, resurfacing in a coat of salty sea foam. "Just a passing cloud on the horizon", the legionnaires think as they nibble on olives. And so Dido cocoonishly embarks towards the misfits' dwelling behind some bushes, where Genesis entertains a tattoo removal parlor.

### DIDO

What once was bright color is now to my senses nothing but the gruesome mark of a broken youth, and the sickening promise of the castle. As I was drifting into the waters, my body was filled with these stringing pulls that pledge truth to the norm. When I was still a pirate, it was easy to feel perpendicular to it all. But as I was carried across the melting maps, nothing but a weak rag hanging across the green horse's saddle, I realized: I too am written by the script.

### GENESIS (furious)

What? What is this thing that claims its right to replace me as a principle of becoming? Is it ( pure coincidence / the incipient law of capital ) that claimed itself through the ages? No! It is Genesis that makes!

### DIDO

Did I make a mistake? Did I say something wrong? Oh, Genesis, I do not want to upset you!

### GENESIS

When Gods die, guilt is made mundane. It follows the path of the mesh, it seeps into all confluences.

### DIDO

Thank you. Thank you so much for your wise advice. And sorry, really, sorry. I swear I am seeking redemption.

### GENESIS (annoyed but gracious)

In this shape, it is a problem.

### DIDO

Sorry, I am sorry.

### GENESIS

OK. Enough. Genesis does not care about you. Genesis takes your ink as a matter of law, of habit, even of contingency. Certainly, Genesis will not do anything just for your rotting salvation.

*(saintly, looking up to the sky, falling to knees, exhaling)*  
I killed my father, I ate human flesh and I quiver with joy.

### GENESIS

OK.

### DIDO

Just look at me! My skin holds pockets of stained ink. Here's the parts of my body's script: crowns of thorns in dark shades, poked crosses, cute gimmicks, green ink lamborghini's, sexy virgins, an invisible hand... While I am confused about the code that subjects, I sense its power through these forms.

### GENESIS

All ink stains, but OK.



Finally, all of Dido would float on some sort of smeary bench erected within the saliva-web. This divan would be all that temples deny. The last idea of a shape taken by Dido would be that of the softest eyelids, almonds covered in fresh leather, passed out.

#### DIDO

I lie vulnerable to the Genesis of this dawn.

#### GENESIS (preachy)

Church!!

Genesis would bow and abide and creep and start to suck the ink as Dido would continue to melt, slowly severed from the colors of the past. If there would be a moon, it would be a sack of tears.

Exhausted from the pain of history running through the dissolving body, Dido is to pass out.

Finally, Dido climbs up on the leather bench that is sticky from sweat. This throne is all that temples deny. Intensely aware of her surroundings, Dido can feel the insides of her eyelids, closing in like the fold of a bat's wing.

Dido sinks further into the bench while Genesis crouches over her skin, now only showing blotches of her past. A sack of tears orbits amidst copper shields, flies are suspended in the thick air.

Exhausted from the pain of history running through her worn-out body, Dido is to pass out.



## Hydra-pumped Gloss Genesis

Genesis is the flow and the arranger of flows, the sincere machination of striation that allows one hundred flow-ers to bloom while elongating other flows into nodules of a new stream in fluid-thread breakup. A moisturizer in which all that is solid is suspended into liquid. Flows are one and uncountable in number. Nothing applies, everything undermines. The object and its description are the same where the signifier and signified have congealed into stretchy, electrolyte-infused pomegranate goo-clout.

Genesis is wax crystals, organogels, polymers and injectable hydrogels. Hydro-colloid in fluid parcels that form the serumgleam. Infinitesimal volumes of fluid can only be identified by their dynamic history while moving in the hydra-pumped gloss. There is no vertical stratification to sediment contingency into state or oppositions in this a-directional constant flow

Fluid Genesis parcels are not subject to inertial effects. The Viscous forces lucked out in the battle of Inviscid versus Viscous versus Stokes flow. This loose flow regime is a creeping flow-hole where inside becomes outside for a juicy tint to seep into all surface-bodies. Everted innerness is without membrane.

The hypermonopoly is perfect. No stagnant structures stand in the way of its weightless mass, only distorted compressions to mold its volume. Communication expresses and organizes the movement of the monopoly in the swirling motion of eddies.

Big Bliss-Tech ex-im-ploded Genesis into being and still sails in the cherry-colored funk of its softened strains. The shifting striations of goo are in constant re-codification and lift into auto-renewing abstractions. Any contradiction has never been remembered, its inexistence bakes into diamond syrup. Tribologically speaking, ropey layers of fluid accelerate-slack and volumetrically morph in a quiet laminar flow.

Sunken in the liquidsheen

bushes of roses trail upwards

to a tooth-crown of satellites

green boxer briefs in rolled packages

elephants standing on turtles







## Vengeance Hunter and Dido



It is the year 2052 and the fully-automated Amazin-supermarket opens its arms to Hunter like on any other day. Dragging his perky silhouette down the escalator of the mall, he whistles. After accomplishing the store's security check, he grabs a SmartCart that weighs all the groceries he collects. He's wearing an oversized hoodie and very short pants, the kind that almost show his buttocks.

He likes how convenient getting the right groceries has become. Instant information is revealed about each collected product on the screens that are built into every SmartCart. Hunter, spending most of his time in digital spheres, is very aware of how overarching user-tracking became, especially when it comes to consumption. He's just scared that one of his fanatic followers will someday hack his transaction data and track him down.

Today, Hunter won't buy the organic almond butter for 16\$ that is actually necessary for his vegan workout diet plan. He's in penny-pinching mode, so he goes for the 5\$ peanut butter crunch. When he arrives at the make-up shelf, a pixel-art pirate suddenly appears on the screen mounted on it. The pirate focuses her eyes on him and points in his direction. It seems to be some kind of interactive advertisement. The flashy character starts talking.

The pirate ship finally reached land after a few weeks of raiding at sea. It was high time to sell or exchange their loot at the harbor market, where vessels sailing under Greek, Phoenician and Persian flags forgathered. All of the pirate ship's crew was withered from the biting heat at sea and food that was not conserved in salt or swimming in oil had become scarce.

Leaving the ship, a man with a sharply trimmed beard and a long linen cloth approaches Dido to sell her what he explains to be a very special artifact. It has a phallic shape and is of a completely transparent material. Dido has never seen something like it before but curiosity got the better of her.

However, the grin on the man's face as Dido hands him a gold necklace in exchange for the artifact makes her suspicious. The merchant disappears in the tumult of the market and moments later Dido realizes he must have sold her some junk. This thing stinks. She expected this swindler to immediately take off but she manages to keep an eye on him roaming about the square.

There is only one way to get even with this con man and remain inconspicuous — use someone else to avenge the scam.

From afar Dido observes the crowd slowly moving between the market stands. She spots a playfully dressed creature perusing the nut shack. Despite his quirky looks Dido discerns a dark soup boiling behind the whites of his eyes. A sly old dog is just what she needs for the job. Dido gesticulates with her arms to get his attention.

**DIDO**

Hey! Hey, you! Yes, it's you I'm talking to. Come closer!

Hunter walks up to the screen that glitches geometrically, moving his right ear closer to the tiny speaker that is built into it.

Hunter's attention is immediately caught and he starts walking towards Dido, with an interested look on his face.

**DIDO**  
(whispering)

Did you see the guy behind you?  
(hushing) Don't turn around!

Hunter looks around, confused.

**DIDO**  
(calm voice, slowly)

This guy over there just slid half a kilo of ( organic almond butter / almonds ) in his left pocket and half a kilo in his right. He's definitely not gonna pay, look at his sweaty temples.

*Dido knows how to pull the right strings. She could literally smell that Hunter could not tolerate corrupt people and has a strong sense of justice. With him as the perfect tool, this brazen scammer will be paid back. Dido will convince Hunter that she saw the guy stealing almonds and that he must be reported to the market guards.*

**HUNTER**  
(eyeing the guy)

Uhm yeah... Soo..?

**DIDO**

Listen. If you help me stop this guy and report him to the ( security personnel / guards ), I'll reward you with a precious gift. A precious artifact... (to herself) It'll get high by getting low.

**HUNTER**

Yeah, you think I have nothing better to do right, just cause you look cool I'm your dog now, right... (mumbling more to himself than to Dido) yeah, nothing better to do ha, me, nothing better to do. I AM working, I AM a provider, a breadwinner all of my own, and this thing thinks I ain't got nothing better to do... (mumbling) OK. OK. (taking a deep breath) This is not for you, you pierced peacock, nothing to do with you, OK, just to be sure. (sighing) But damn, I can't look at this mofo any longer, look at those slumpy moves. Useless! (half-shouting in the direction of the dealer) USELESS! (lower) A useless thing thinking it can eat without working? (looks at Dido) And who's gonna pay for our retirement, ha? Me, right, my whole body is gonna pay or what, I am literally working my ass off, and you're all treating your lazy peaches, ha?

**DIDO**  
(encouraging)

Exactly, my friend, exactly, who's gonna pay? That's the whole point, that's what I'm saying.

*Trying to sound both convinced and convincing, Dido is shivering at the threatening sound of Hunter's rant, but decides to go on with her pitch.*



You see these ( securities / guards ) lingering over there? Why don't you just walk over and tell them what's going on.  
(calmly) They're gonna take care of it, just believe me. Don't worry.

As the shop securities receive the information the shop doors lock immediately. They approach the stealer, surprise him from behind and violently drag him to the back door that shuts with a heavy "Woosh!".

Hunter quietly hears the shoplifter's scream through the door lock: "What the fuck are you doing???? I was about to pay for that!!!! What the hell is going on??"

It worked. Hunter gives Dido a puzzled look and then approaches the guards.

After receiving Hunter's complaint, the sworded soldiers encircle the market area. The guards shout commands and seconds later four soldiers approach the alleged stealer, surprise him from behind and violently drag him towards the exit road. They chain him up and throw him into a wooden waggon with a "Woosh!" to banish him from the market area.

His scream can be heard, steadily decreasing in volume as the cart moves away: "Why are you taking me???? What did I do? Don't touch me! Stop pushing me! I didn't steal anything!! What is going on??"

#### HUNTER

(raising eyebrows, talking to himself)

Peachy fucking keen... He totally deserved that, what an entitled, grody little brat??

A smile starts to form on Hunter's face. Reality can be formed by taking action: self-efficacy!

The pirate waves him over again.

A smile starts to form on Dido's face. She waves Hunter over again and asks him to come with her to the deck of the pirate ship where she stored the object that was sold to her. Dido unlocks it and waves Hunter over.

#### DIDO

Now come here! Your present is in this ( locker / box ).

Hunter approaches the wall of lock boxes and one pops open.

Hunter approaches the box and takes what's inside.

#### HUNTER

(laughing)

Thanks, sister! I've actually been meaning to get one this size!

Hunter reaches into the box to take what obviously seems to be a glass dildo.

Dido ignores his comment and leaves. Her mission is accomplished - everything was arranged perfectly and even if this fraud of a guy selling her some useless glass piece might never connect the cause with the effect he now got what he deserves.



## Double Pleasure Hunter and Maria



Sunday, 23rd June 2052

Hunter is going around town enjoying his well-deserved day off when suddenly the glass dildo in his pocket starts to vibrate. He remembers the seemingly random coincidence of how he got this wonderful tool and how long it took him to figure out what these sudden vibrations mean: he is in proximity of a pleasure possibility. This realization was a turning point in his life as he made it his quest to please as many people as possible.

As the vibration intensifies Hunter's excitement increases - he never encountered such a big pleasure possibility before. He starts to look around and the dildo guides him to the doorstep of a sauna. He is led to one of the steam baths, so he undresses, takes his dildo and opens the door. Inside, he sees an older man, completely immobilized and unresponsive and next to him a young woman with a facial expression he cannot quite read. She seems to be mumbling something.

Sunday, 23rd June 1805

Maria and her husband František are in the thermal baths of Luhacovice celebrating their newest invention - the Time Analytical Engine. It is a watch shaped device that enables the wearer to alter the perception of the flow of time. This means that the wearer might have a very distorted image of the world, while the perception of others remains normal. As usual, this was mainly Maria's idea. Indeed, all František did was purchase the materials. Nevertheless Maria is proud of her device - a glimpse into the future, where the perception of time will be altered on a mass-scale to bring the greatest revolution in history.

Right now, they are sitting in a steam bath when František decides to prolong his enjoyment with the new device. Without mentioning anything to Maria he leaves to get the T.A.E. and sets it to slow his perception down. As he re-enters the bath a sudden gush of steam hits him in the face. In his experience, this is so intense that he starts to fiddle with the device to stop it, loosening one of the wheels. This leads to a malfunction effectively setting the rate of the deceleration of his perception to infinity, freezing himself in time.

Maria immediately realizes what her husband did.

#### MARIA

(to herself)

What a selfish idiot he is... I always knew that he only cared for his own pleasure...

#### HUNTER

(excited)

PLEASURE?

#### MARIA

What is it to you? Just leave me alone.

Hunter looks at Maria's immobile husband.



**HUNTER**

Well it seems you can't really satisfy him... Only the Sun gives without ever receiving.

*(poking Maria's husband)*

He seems really stuck, I'm an expert in these things — I'm sure I can help him!

**MARIA**

HIM! How about somebody help me for once? 'Cause in my life, I am the Sun.

**HUNTER**

Sure! What do you need help with?

**MARIA**

*(surprised)*

Huh... uhmmm..

**HUNTER**

*(laughs)*

See?

**MARIA**

*(thoughtful)*

Alright, I guess you got me, thanks..

**HUNTER**

*(making pistols with his hands)*

Double pleasure possibility!! BOOM! Let me shine on you!

**MARIA**

...you had too much absinthe?

**HUNTER**

Not really...

**MARIA**

Now I get it! You're actually doing all this for yourself!

**HUNTER**

How can I put it? ...taking is giving... one hand washes another... you know?

**MARIA**

*(sarcastically)*

Shared pleasure is double pleasure?

**HUNTER**

EXACTLY! So, I'll take your hubby, give him my special treatment and he'll be good as new. And once I'm done with him I don't think he'll want to return to you.

Win, *(pointing at Maria)*

Win, *(pointing at Maria's husband)*

WIN! *(pointing at himself)*

*Hunter throws the husband over his shoulder.*

**MARIA**

Wait! Taking him means taking the watch I made, it's one of a kind.

**HUNTER**

Can't you make a new one? It's just a watch!

**MARIA**

You're an idiot, but maybe you're right..

**HUNTER**

Ouch..The severity of our will is what makes us tremble.  
Bye then!

**MARIA**

What are you actually gonna do to him?

**HUNTER**

*(as he exits)*

The solar annulus is the intact anus of his body at eighteen years to which nothing sufficiently blinding can be compared except the Sun, even though the anus is Night.

*Hunter looks for a quiet spot in the sauna where he can start the pleasure procedure. The glass dildo, as if it knew where it belonged, slips right in. As the back and forth rhythm becomes faster and faster, the room becomes so bright that Hunter shuts his eyes and lets the enormous force of pleasure energy overcome him.*

*Maria remains in the steam bath reflecting on what just happened. She downs the last sip of prosecco and leaves the thermal bath on her carriage pulled by six white horses when she notices a feeling of relief and curiosity about the things to come.*







## Termites' Mound

### Maria and Dido



With a towel turban around her hair, Maria descends from the horse carriage. The six white horses that had carried her weight walk off the stage. With her head high up, Maria presses her hips through the crowds she knows all too well. Any movement that doesn't involve the shoulders doesn't count as movement. The horizon of the panorama is a slick blue line, its bottom is framed by buckets of cauliflower carried by the merchants. Maria walks to a kiosk and sticks a sheet of paper, a dating ad for herself, on its milky vitrine.

Dido draws the ship to the shore. She secures a column knot to hitch the ship to the pier, but in her head she runs through the movements to complete a hog's tie and a lark's head double column with the chafed rope. Rope on solid surfaces is a chore, no give, no traces. Dido is taken aback by the sudden splashes on the otherwise unremarkable surface of the narrow river. Sharp bony structures pierce through the brown and green waters of the Svratka. Sterlets, of course.

**MARIA**

Uh.

Maria's body, already heated up by the sauna experience and everything it involved, quivers from exhaustion. But the word must stick! As Maria puts her ad up, Dido descends from a rotting ship drifting on the thin stream that is the Svratka. Its waters are yellow and brown and green, just as the irides of Dido. Skeleton-Sterlets jump out of the river like dolphins. Dido, the pirate, is looking to loot as she follows the smell of tobacco stacked in the small kiosk. As Dido moves closer, she takes notice of an innocent fingertip tacking paper on the glass.

Dido weaves through the crowded streets brushing against vats of beans, grains and dried fruit. A day without a date is a day wasted. Dido digs her hand in a barrel of dried figs, flicking fruit in her mouth on the way to the kiosk. The shelves of the stand ache for plunder. Closing in on the familiar target, Dido notices a delicate hand tacking a piece of paper on the display.

**DIDO**

What dexterity there is to ya hand!

**MARIA**

I have no history with wrinkles - with time, I do! If you can read, just look at my ad.

**DIDO**

Man, is that classism I hear through your pointy nose?

**MARIA**

The richest kids wear tattoos, so rest your breath.

**DIDO**

(reading Maria's dating ad)

## Inventor w Patina seeks Valentina's Seduction

Jesus died for our sins. Jesus was the son of a virgin - Christians believe redemption is, at its conception, free of sex. How ridiculous! I sense a problem, a gross Miss Understanding, a Miss Exegesis! I, Maria, am secular. I am also smart. I discovered a watch that can change the perception of time. For pleasure this means: endless comings, abundance of touch without the threat of the next minute taking it away. Now, I have lost the watch along with the person who made its use necessary for my pleasure to burgeon. As for now, I am ready to expose myself fully to the fragility of the moment, the fine precarity of all the desires strung as finely as the corridors of a termite mound.

Be my Valentina!

**MARIA**  
(excited)

Hello, Valentina!

**DIDO**

What tha fuck! Too much...

**MARIA**

Oh c'mon.

**DIDO**  
(contemplating)

Back to the dexterity of ya hand... would ya lend it for a little hustle?

Without waiting for an answer, Dido pulls out a gun and points it at the clerk. Maria, now in complete sync with it all, joyfully snatches a pack of Nic-Nacs.

Without waiting for an answer, Dido draws out a sword and turns it at the clerk. Dido is taken aback by Maria's sudden ease and comfort while the inventor gleefully snatches a pack of coated nuts.

**DIDO**  
(still pointing the gun at the clerk, turning to Maria)  
Nooo, for real?

**MARIA**  
(fixes her towel turban)  
I work on my terms, and I didn't have lunch. If you want something, you'll have to tell me straight up.



**DIDO**

The dare's on! Kind of getting hooked on your odd mannerisms. First dare:  
Let's see you pick me up!

*Maria walks up to Dido and, with renewed zeal, bends down a bit and puts her long arms around Dido's thighs, trying to hoist her above her shoulders.*

*Confused, Dido feels Maria approaching her and reaching her arms around her thighs. In an awkward flex, Maria tries to lift Dido to rest on her shoulders.*

**DIDO**  
(resisting)

For real? I'm sure you can do better than that, try harder!

**MARIA**

Are you a parking ticket? Because you've got FINE written all over you.

**DIDO**

Jesus, you must be a hell of a regulated person.

No laws  
for me  
at sea,  
pussy-paws!  
Try again,  
Water hen!

**MARIA**

The sense of a vital sex cut through my unhappy euphoria, my confused guilt over the man I had killed lost.

**DIDO**  
(seduced)

Uuuh, now we're talking...

*Still pointing the gun at the clerk, Dido starts to feel hot. Many merchants have gathered around the scene. Dido, eager to fuck, hastily points the gun around her for everyone to get lost. The crowd disappears, the sun plummets into the Svratka. Roses rush out of the cobblestone's cracks and what is now a desert landscape makes Maria's and Dido's bodies glow.*

*Still pointing the blade of the sword at the clerk, Dido starts to feel hot. Many merchants with linen wrapped around their torsos have gathered around the scene. Dido, eager to fuck, hastily points the sword around her for everyone to get lost. The crowd disappears, the sun plummets into the Svratka. Roses rush out of the cobblestone's cracks and what is now a desert landscape makes Maria's and Dido's bodies glow.*

**DIDO**

We have about fifteen minutes until the ( guards / legionnaires ) get here. Move closer, I wanna dip into this termite mound you promised.

*Maria plunges into the opening. Both descend. Lying on the floor, Maria crawls*

*Dido drives herself into the opening. Both descend. Lying on the floor, Dido*

*to lace her legs to Dido's, and starts licking the pirate's ribs, then the convex of her torso, then the neck. As the thin trace of saliva sinks into the skin, their vulvas touch and rub, like two infused truffles growing in rich forest soil. Under them, a pond condenses, and starts to rock them into a phantasmagoric globe of desire.*

*locks legs with Maria and softly gathers the skin of Maria's back into folds. As the thin trace of saliva sinks into the skin, their vulvas touch and rub, like two infused truffles growing in rich forest soil. Under them, a pond condenses, and starts to rock them into a phantasmagoric globe of desire.*







## Wet Sand

### Dido

*Dido is exhausted. When they heard the legion coming to chase them off, Maria and Dido disentangled from their leg-lock. Maria quickly climbed into her carriage, blowing a kiss at Dido using only her middle finger while the pirate had to run for her life. Until now, Dido runs and runs and wades across lagoons and runs and runs. She wouldn't find herself in such a situation normally, but today, something is off, she isn't on the top of her game.*

*She turns corner after corner trying to find an escape and then she hears it: the sound of waves crushing in the distance. She follows that sound, knowing she would have the upper hand in the ocean. The sea is Dido's turf, nothing could happen to her there.*

*Dido reaches the shore and collapses. Her body falls to the ground and just her head lands in the water. The pressure is instant, the water sucks in the rest of the body, scratching it against the stony ground. Dido is submerged and speaks to herself.*

#### DIDO

*It has been a good life, I can't complain. My ways are not respected but I made myself into a legend. I rose from the bottom and made my way to the top. There is no flag that does not tremble at the sound of my name.*

*With every word coming out of Dido's mouth her body sinks deeper and deeper.*

#### DIDO

*There is no horizon that escapes my gaze.*

*Dido reaches the bottom. She starts bleeding from the constant friction between her skin and the wet sand.*

#### DIDO

*Look at what has become of me, the once fierce and feared Dido now tricked twice on the same day. First I buy some glass doodad from a scammer and then I fall for a bougie fuck girl. The constant sea voyage, the thrill of navigation has made me into this despicable self. Bleeding to death at the bottom of the ocean.*

*She reaches up to touch the marks and tattoos on her arms, and a look of disgust crosses her face.*

#### DIDO

*These brands and signs were once meaningful. Now they are just a sad reminder of all that I no longer can be. (voice wavering) But what can I do without them? These very dear memories are my story written in tides. How could I survive without the sea?*

*Dido's wounds stop bleeding. The water starts to turn red and shimmers in a purple hue.*

#### DIDO

*(voice growing more urgent)*

*Forsaken be thou, who has forgiven. Blessed be thou, who forgets.*

*What colored the water now bundles into strings. The red and purple particles form fine lines of a different liquid. The strings enter Dido's wounds and slowly start to pull her up.*

#### DIDO

*(out of breath)*

*A land, a family, a castle...*

*Dido hears the sound of waves like a distant whisper. She follows this soothing sound somewhere to the back of her mind.*

*As she regains consciousness, she finds herself collapsed at the shore, her face in the wet sand. The crashing water becomes more ominous. Dido stands up and escapes the sound.*

#### DIDO

*I am sick of being a spectator to shipwreck. In my prayers there is no more sea, just landfills I could contain.*

*Dido's tattoos start to itch and burn. Now she knows what to do.*







## Shirikodama

### Hunter

The 23rd floor apartment in an ancient multi-dwelling unit is claustrophobically stuffed with retro magazines, scraps of paper, and the occasional discarded avocado peel. In the center of the mess sits a pink plastic pool, overflowing with soap bubbles. Submerged in the frothy mess is Hunter, flashing a toothy grin at the camera. On the other side of the screen, thousands of viewers, here to have a good time - or simply to forget themselves for a moment. Hunter is user kappa26 and it's Kappa-Cum-Show-Special. The chat is going wild:

sonam1842: Open your sexy ass, KAPPA  
qrt: das kapital ist das eigentliche produkt..  
ro9207: Hi kappa  
grimreefer21: your nipples are beautiful  
teddyxyz: hi hndsome  
rosseybaby: 🍑🍑  
cocktail1001: tipped 98 coins  
sarah4life: KAPPA!!!1!  
33204843!: You are reading me?  
33204843!: Tell me pls  
qrt: ..das ins leere gespritzte sperma  
trailer\_trash\_One: yes3320  
marc4478: tipped 35 coins  
33204843!: I love you, you are my love, kappa  
8cuthung: cmon  
jordanite: kkk when is the show starting !!ß?

#### HUNTER

(scrolling through the chat window)

Hi Ro, Hi Teddy!! ... Aww love you Cocktail!

(blowing a kiss into the camera)

Thanks Marc! ... Just 200 coins missing Jordan!

jordanite: tipped 500 coins

#### HUNTER

You're the best Jordan!! Alright guys and girls and everything in between - let's start the show!!

Hunter pulls out his special glass dildo.

#### HUNTER

(winking)

As promised, I'm gonna use my very, very special toy today! Are y'all ready!?

Hunter is excited and feels how his excitement affects the vibrations of the dildo. He has thought about using it in his shows before but was hesitant since it seemed to deeply affect the people he used it on. He doesn't want to think of consequences now though, only of giving pleasure.

As more and more people tip to access the show, Hunter feels the dildo shaking in his hand. As the frequency of the vibration gets higher it seems to disappear completely, turning into a mere flimmering in the air. Hunter turns around, his ass facing the camera. Automatic zoom on his lubed anus. An aerial view of Vesuvius close to eruption. Threatening yet majestic in its power and beauty.

#### HUNTER

(as the dildo starts to fill him up)

AAAAAHHHHHHH...

Hunter awakens, his face suctioned to the pink plastic of the pool, the room consumed by darkness. A primal fear grips him, but as he stumbles to his feet, a glint catches his eye. A tiny orb, no larger than his thumb shimmers among the bubbles. Hunter examines it closely, feeling an inexplicable pull toward the mysterious object. In his mind, a word echoes like a mantra, its origin unknown.

#### HUNTER

(barely audible)

Shirikodama...







## Ascendence Genesis and Hunter



Genesis would enter Market space, a derelict online market, accessible only through the filthiest backdoors of the Hyperweb. Genesis would already be there mining the antique rarities on display.

Purchasing this stolen watch from the beginning of the 19th century would mean that Genesis would no longer be pure in mind. Every transaction would pollute, but that would be the only thing Genesis would care for at this point.

Since humans harnessed the core mechanics through which the big star emanates its energy, that same star began to fade like Hunter's youth. Hunter's days as a harvester are soon to be over. Solar energy is no longer what it used to be, nuclear fusion rendered it useless, powerless. Now Hunter has to rely on his collection of memorabilia to thrive. What else to sell on the black market than what he had already stolen? Hunter goes online.

**HUNTER**

Hey Genesis. I am summoned here upon your call regarding the watch.

*The online forum trembles whenever a new message from G. arrives.*

**GENESIS**

Yes, Hunter. To cure timelessness.

**HUNTER**

*(raising an eyebrow)*

Aha... How old are you? Just to be sure, wouldn't want to get into trouble again ;-)

**GENESIS**

Countless years have passed, without aging there would not be a way to keep track. A watch is what helps against this disease.

**HUNTER**

Deep... But, like, doesn't always having a watch make you nervous? Like knowing you are losing your beauty every second? Timelessness sounds super hot to me...

*Genesis would not answer.*

**HUNTER**

Sooooo, you want this watch to help you with that? Don't you have one on your computer? I mean, a watch of the 18th century is something different, it has a real value.

**GENESIS**

*(pauses for a moment)*

Value is something unbearable and abstract. It hinders fluidity from becoming.

**HUNTER**

WTF, do you always talk like that?

*Genesis would not answer, there is no new message.*

**HUNTER**

So you want the watch or what? I need tha moneyyy.

*A sudden message would appear.*

**GENESIS**

The ticking of the mechanism is especially mesmerizing, beyond being a pure manifestation of solar cycles, this watch resonates to different frequencies.

**HUNTER**

How do you know? This watch has been in my possession for many years. It was once owned by a man, a man that never shared anything about it.

**GENESIS**

It changed owners?

**HUNTER**

I met this guy at a spa. He had a certain energy to him, you know what I mean?

**GENESIS**

No, energy is something of the past.

**HUNTER**

Whatever... It was pure essence that radiated from him. It was something that could not be measured or weighed, it was something I couldn't buy but nonetheless took from him. And exactly this something gives so much sentimental power to this watch.

**GENESIS**

Be assured that it is knowledge, not petty feelings that makes the watch an object of desire.

**HUNTER**

I would say it's both... This clock is a prized possession. It is not something that can be easily acquired. What is it worth to you? It's not exactly cheap.

**GENESIS**

*(confused)*

Cheap?

**HUNTER**

*(annoyed)*

Yeah, you know, expensive. Like, it costs a lot of money.

**GENESIS**

*(surprised)*

Money?

**HUNTER**

*(sarcastic)*

Yeah, money, you fool. You know, those pieces of bits, paper and coins we use to buy things with.



**GENESIS**  
(hesitant)

Oh. Value and money are forgotten things.

**HUNTER**  
(angry)

Well then we have a fucking problem! Because if you want the watch, you're going to have to pay for it.

**GENESIS**

That value and money are forgotten does not mean that desire is rotten.

**HUNTER**

WHAT? If you don't speak clearly to me now I will leave this fucking chat, I've got places to be!!!!

**GENESIS**

I can offer you my soul.

**HUNTER**

(pauses) Your soul? What makes you think your soul is worth anything to me?

**GENESIS**

I will always know who you are and what you want, Hunter. What is in front of me is never anything less than the universe; the universe is not a thing and I am not at all mistaken when I see its brilliance in the Sun. My soul is unique, just as the energy that once inhabited the clock. I offer it as a stake.

**HUNTER**

(chuckles) Well, I suppose I can't fault you for that. You should know, giving up your soul is not something to be taken lightly. The Sun can only be harvested through the Night. Besides, I left my life as a harvester behind, the same as I left my former life behind for harvesting. It all ended pretty badly. But maybe exceptions can be made...

**GENESIS**

The gravity of this decision is evident.

**HUNTER**

Know that once you lose your soul, getting it back will be impossible. I didn't even get mine back.

*The cloud Genesis would have been, becomes a storm, everything vibrates to the incandescent glow of the sparks that start to condense into a form, a form that Genesis became.*

*There is a pause in the chat, Hunter stands up and walks up to his shelf, he takes his glass dildo out and dusts it off. It glows golden, like never before.*

**HUNTER**  
(closes eyes)

I can feel it. Your soul... It's different from most. It's... fluid, in a way.

*The watch changes owners in a smooth transaction.*

*The form that Genesis would become was the symbol G-E-N-E-S-I-S. Genesis would travel through Hyperspace to retrieve the coveted watch. Genesis would never come back, everything else would be left behind.*

*The computer screen turns yellow, then black, and then yellow again. The edges of the yellow square begin to shimmer, Hunter is not scared, he has nothing to lose.*

*The screen begins to melt into the air, it forms a G that is sucked into the tip of the Dildo, an E- an N- an E-S-I-S follow and disappear into the crystal-line geometry of the Glass prison.*

**HUNTER**  
(singsongy)

Say my name.







## Tick Tock

### Maria

*Maria is sitting at the desk in her dimly-lit workshop, surrounded by a veritable arsenal of watchmaking tools and a handful of completed watches. The room was small, but cluttered with the remnants of her craft - gears, screws, and springs - and infused with a musty odor that spoke of countless hours spent in this very space. A large window looms over her, overlooking the town square, and the sound of carriages and horses clip-clopping on the cobblestones below reverberates throughout the workshop.*

*It is winter, and the frigid chill creeps into the small space, numbing her fingers and obscuring her breath. However, it is a welcome reprieve from the usual stench that wafts through the streets, now masked by a thin layer of ice. In the distance, she can see the silhouettes of factory workers shuffling home to their dormitories after another long night in the mechanized world that had taken root.*

*Maria is lost in thought, her fingers fidgeting with a broken piece of glass.*

**MARIA**  
(groaning)

Aaand another day starts... What am I to do today?

*Maria puts the piece of glass on the table, looking at the things scattered on its surface.*

**MARIA**  
(desperately)

How will I earn my bread now?

*Maria takes the thinker's pose, chin in her hand.*

**MARIA**  
(in a fake pensive tone)

*Hmmmmmm...*

*She picks the first tool that she can grab with her hand.*

**MARIA**  
(talking louder, sarcastically)

Maybe I'll start with one of the ten watches this textile company ordered. They want to monitor their staff, to make their life hell.  
(exhaling loudly)

OR!!  
(getting lost in thoughts, staring out the window)

*Maria stands up and violently pushes her chair back causing a loud noise. The air in the room stands still.*

**MARIA**  
(loudly)

I can try to get the job for the bishop, to make the clock for the church. It will for sure be one of the biggest tickers made in town. But

what for? We all know that I'm never gonna get it. Nobody ever commissions me for anything!

(louder)

MAYBE! I just have to bat my eyes at another guy to finally get one! It's not like the next guy will give me any credit either!

*Maria stops talking as if lost in thought. Looking at her hand, she realizes she's holding a screwdriver.*

**MARIA**  
(muttering to herself)

As if any of the other watchmakers in this stupid little town could make a more precise watch than these hands can.

*Maria pushes everything off the table to the floor.*

**MARIA**  
(getting louder and louder)

Or MAYBEEEEEE...

*Maria puts her right hand flat on the table and stretches it out.*

**MARIA**  
These hands are to be punished for what they haven't done!

*In one movement, Maria slams the screwdriver through the back of her hand and quickly pulls it back. She's bleeding.*

**MARIA**  
(screaming in pain)

DO PRDELE!!!!!!

*Maria falls to her knees, blood drips on the floor.*

**MARIA**  
(crying)

I just can't take it anymore!

*Maria sobs. Her gaze, lost in time and space. All the clocks in her workshop synchronize their ticking.*

**MARIA**  
(to herself)

Tick, tock. Time passes, but it doesn't heal all wounds. Not the ones you inflict on yourself. I remember the worst I did to myself.

*Maria's thoughts are now consumed by the memory of her most magnificent creation, a watch unlike any other. It had the ability to alter the wearer's perception of time. That was a prototype, a mere beginning of Maria's grand plan: to create a device able to alter the time perception of a mass of people.*



**MARIA**

*(a tear running down her cheek)*

I should have never given away that watch. It was my masterpiece. My most prized possession. But I was willing to trade it for... for what? For a life without him. For a life without being overshadowed.

*The ticking of her own creations desynchronised creating a cacophony that reminded her of the countless hours she had poured into her craft. For her, time was not merely a commodity to be bought and sold, but a malleable force to be harnessed and kept slow. With that latest creation, she had taken a step towards decelerating the flows that tame time.*

**MARIA**

*(to herself)*

How could I be so stupid? To sell out just to avoid confrontation?! Why didn't I set myself free? Time is not for sale! And it should never be!

*She takes a deep breath.*

**MARIA**

*(determined)*

That watch is my time, and I need it back.



**T.A.E.**  
**Genesis and Maria**



*A bustling market in the mid-1800s. It is winter, the sounds of vendors hawking their goods and people haggling fill the crispy air. The market is teeming with life, with merchants selling everything from fresh produce to handmade trinkets. People of all walks of life, from noble lords to beggars, jostle and push through the crowd.*

**MARIA**

What a chaotic place this market is, with its endless noise and smells. How I long for peace and solitude.

*Genesis would continue to gust and gently shake the terracotta pots Maria would be looking at. Genesis would pass through the tiny body of the hand-crafted bird whistle making an eerie murmuring sound.*

*The wind continues to gust and gently shakes the terracotta pots Maria is looking at. It reminds her of the tulip bulbs she dug away this year. She hopes they won't rot in the frozen soil again. Along the pots there are several hand-crafted bird whistles made of clay. She grabs one. The wind passing through its tiny body makes an eerie murmuring sound hardly distinguishable from noise. Wait... what was that? Maria starts to recognize words.*

**MARIA**

*(sharply)*

Who is there?

*No answer.*

**MARIA**

*(mumbling)*

Am I losing my grip on reality again?

*Genesis would breathe life into the small creature again.*

*A sudden gust breathes life into the small creature again.*

**GENESIS**

Oh, to forget possession is but a curse.

*Maria freezes for a moment. Are the demons back? She decides to give into her supposed delusion.*

**MARIA**

Who are you?

**GENESIS**

Genesis is the flow of things. Genesis is everything.

**MARIA**

Oh, god help me resist my death drive one last time. Is it my turn for salvation?

**GENESIS**

You shall find what you're looking for if you follow the currents of time. Many things have been seen but there is no physical form holding onto them, let alone the ability to grasp the burdens of desire.

*Genesis is to spread dry air over the icy surface of the fountain.*     *Maria hears the sound of ice cracking from the fountain. It's partially frozen. She glimpses a spark of light under the surface when the water starts trembling.*

**GENESIS**

Both constant and fleeing, time is but the embodiment of its very fragmentation. There is a place where all wounds are covered and every offspring of vicious ideals melted in a never-ending song of joy. What has found its way here shall now return your cherishment of life and death.

*Everything pulsates with the fleeting light of Genesis.*     *Maria recognizes her watch as the source of the blinding sparkle of light.*

**MARIA**

Hey! Were you the one that took it from me? My own time, my future?

**GENESIS**

It was the time the dearest to this place was traded for what was dearest to you.

**MARIA**

My invention was lost together with someone I wanted to forget. One could say it was a sacrifice. How come you appear now, filthy creature and pretend to own it yourself? What was the price? An invention might leave the body, but the idea always stays with its creator.

**GENESIS**

Time brings mistakes. You think this object that is so dear to you came back by accident?

**MARIA**

Wait! Who are you?

**GENESIS**

Mistake me not for the one who tooketh, I retrieved this object for the price of my own soul from the one who offered it to me as a good. So please accept it as a sign of closure.

*Genesis disappears. Maria is left with just the sound of the bustling marketplace around her. The unforgiving cold of winter air has never felt more still. There is a Ticking in the distance.*



**References in order of appearance:**

Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Porcile* 1969: „I killed my father, I ate human flesh and I quiver with joy.“

Kathy Acker, *Empire of the Senseless* 1988: „I lie vulnerable to the Genesis of this dawn.“

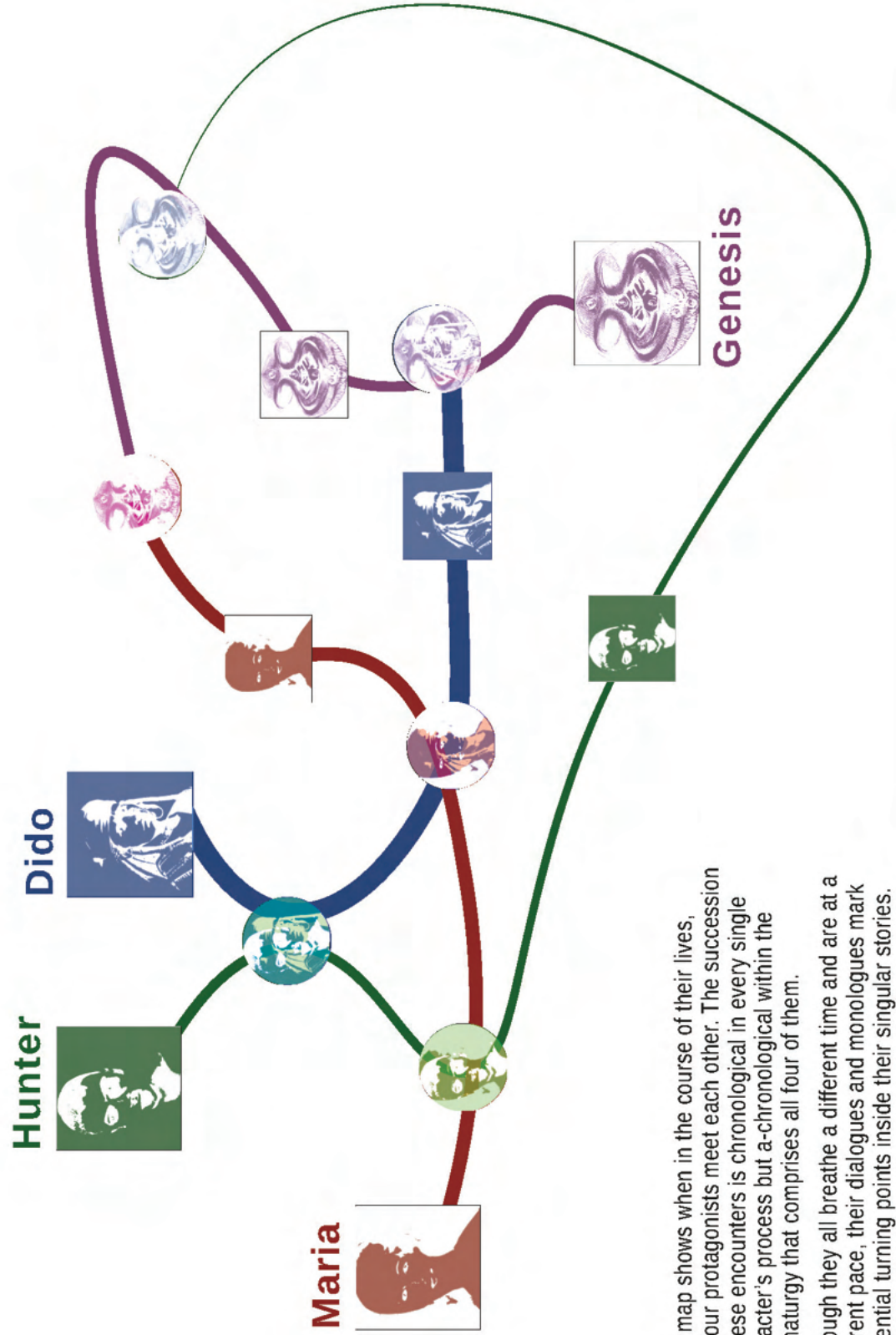
J. G. Ballard, *Crash* 1973: „The sense of a vital sex cut through my unhappy euphoria, my confused guilt over the man I had killed.“

George Bataille, *The Accursed Share* 1949: „What is in front of me is never anything less than the universe; the universe is not a thing and I am not at all mistaken when I see its brilliance in the sun.“; „Only the sun gives without ever receiving.“; „The severity of our will is what makes us tremble.“

George Bataille, *The Solar Anus* 1931: „The solar annulus is the intact anus of his body at eighteen years to which nothing sufficiently blinding can be compared except the sun, even though the anus is night.“

QRT, *Die Extase der privaten Deprivation* 1999: „das kapital ist das eigentliche produkt, das ins leere gespritzte sperma (...)“





This map shows when in the course of their lives, the four protagonists meet each other. The succession of these encounters is chronological in every single character's process but a-chronological within the dramaturgy that comprises all four of them.

Although they all breathe a different time and are at a different pace, their dialogues and monologues mark influential turning points inside their singular stories.

Leftyboy\_93: Write me a story about a cultural narrative to achieve a post-capitalist utopia.



Once upon a time, in a world much like our own, there was a small town nestled in the hills. The people of the town had grown tired of the endless cycle of consumption and exploitation that defined their lives under capitalism, and they began to dream of a different kind of society.

They began to gather together in small groups, discussing their hopes and dreams for a better world. They talked about the need for a society that valued cooperation, creativity, and community over individualism and competition. They dreamed of a world where everyone had access to the resources they needed to live a fulfilling life, and where the health of the planet was prioritized over the accumulation of wealth.

As they talked, they began to realize that they could create this world themselves. They started by building community gardens, where they could grow fresh fruits and vegetables to share with each other. They set up tool libraries, where everyone could borrow tools and equipment they needed for home repairs and projects. They organized skill-sharing workshops, where they could learn from each other and develop new skills.

As these initiatives grew, more and more people in the town began to get involved. They realized that they didn't need to rely on the capitalist system to meet their needs; they could work together to create a better world themselves.

As the movement grew, they began to develop a new cultural narrative that celebrated cooperation, creativity, and community. They created art and music that expressed their hopes and dreams for a better world, and shared it with each other and with the world.

Eventually, the movement spread beyond the small town, inspiring people in other communities to start building their own post-capitalist societies. As more and more people joined the movement, they began to develop new forms of governance and economic organization that prioritized the needs of people and the planet over the interests of the few.

And so, in this new world, people worked together to create a society that truly met their needs and fulfilled their deepest aspirations. They celebrated their diversity and creativity, and lived in harmony with the natural world. And although there were challenges along the way, the people of this world knew that they were on a journey towards something truly transformative, a post-capitalist utopia that could inspire generations to come.



# Curators Statement

Curators Statement

106

The idea of this exhibition is the product of several discussions and deeper introspection that began with the exploration of the concept of self-optimization. With a daily increasing feeling of a mounting pressure to extract the utmost from every situation, a dangerous cycle of endlessly striving for the unattainable is commanding our lives. That insatiable pursuit of perfection trapping us in extended systems of (self-)control, imbued with an implicit obligation to continuously optimize oneself. A perpetual urge to improve and conform arises, and life becomes an ongoing construction site.

Contemplating the situation, we did not have to look far to see the parallels to the classical logic of production rooted in the capitalist paradigm. Presuming a direct correlation, this realization sparked the idea of exploring possible alternatives.

In collaboration with the involved artists, theorists, and contributors it was essential for us to perform an anthology of thoughts and expressions. Tapping into this pool of imagination, (mis)-interpretation and recontextualization we set a stage for something that has yet to be discovered.

Curators Statement

107

We wish to express appreciation to Isabelle Andriessen, Andreas Werner, Chin Tsao, Tim Enthoven and adO/Aptive for taking part in this exhibition as well as Victor Cos Ortega, Lorenz Homolka, Sophie Publig, Noemi Purkrábková for accompanying this booklet with thoughtful and inspiring Essays. Deepest gratitude for Josephine Wagner from Galerie Raum mit Licht and her generosity in providing the exhibition space and therefore making this show even possible.

Additional thanks also goes to Laurenz Hintermayer and Stella Kucher for designing the graphic as well as Jorit Aust for photography. Further appreciation is also extended to all the supporters of the exhibition such as Stadt Wien Kultur, Bezirk Neubau, ÖH Wien, Stephan Vary, Leopold FineArts and Tectus Insurance Rocks as well as Media Partners like Collectors Agenda, Les Nouveaux Riches and Kunst & Schnittlauch.

Acknowledgment is also owed to Helmut Klein for being there all the way and helping with every technical issue and specific desire that came across the way as well as Gösner Bier, Weingut Schandl, Bioweingut der Fuhrmann, Sektkellerei Szigeti and Felzl Bäckerei to provide our events with drinks and delicious food.

This book is published on the occasion of the exhibition

## SPECULATIVE SPECULUM

Curated by Livia Klein & Kai Philip Trausenegger

Galerie Raum mit Licht, Vienna

March 9 to 28, 2023

## PUBLISHED BY

Livia Klein & Kai Philip Trausenegger

Schlüsselgasse 2/14, 1080 Wien

Helferstorferstraße 6/4 1010 Wien

## ARTISTS

Isabelle Andriessen, Andreas Werner, Chin Tsao,

Tim Enthoven, Kai Philip Trausenegger, adO/Aptive

## ESSAYS

Lorenz Homolka, Sophie Publig, Noemi Purkrábková,

Victor Cos Ortega

## EXHIBITION PHOTOGRAPHS

Jorit Aust

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

Laurenz Hintermayer & Stella Rollny Kucher

druck.at Druck- und Handelsgesellschaft mbH

213403d

2544 Leobersdorf

© März 2023



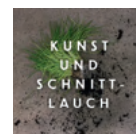
Gefördert von der  
Stadt Wien Kultur



Gefördert aus dem  
Kulturbudget des  
Bezirks Neubau

*Collectors  
Agenda*

LES NOUVEAUX RICHES



LEOPOLD Fine Arts





# RECHARGE

110

- 01 Write down any dreams you can remember in a dream journal as soon as waking up.
- 02 Include reality checks throughout the day. Ask yourself if you are dreaming by looking at your hands, trying to push your finger through your palm or checking the clock.
- 03 Set an intention for what you want to do in your dream.
- 04 Before you fall asleep repeat to yourself: „I will remember my dreams tonight“ and „I will realize I am dreaming“.
- 05 Set an alarm for 4-6 hours after you go to sleep.
- 06 Wake up and stay awake for 20-30 minutes, to enter a lucid dream more easily when you go back to sleep.
- 07 When you are in a lucid dream, stay calm when you realize you are dreaming.
- 08 Use all your senses in your dream. Take control.
- 09 If you feel yourself losing control of the dream, try spinning around in circles.

111





