NEW ALCHEMISTS
SALAMANCA ARTS CENTRE

ART ORIENTÉ OBJET
ORON CATTS & IONAT ZURR
WITH CORRIE VAN SICE
IAN HAIG
NADEGE PHILIPPE-JANON
MICHAELA GLEAVE
THOMAS THWAITES
LU YANG

CURATED BY DR ALICIA KING
LONG GALLERY
23 JULY–28 AUGUST 2016
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Dr Alicia King is a rigorous investigative interdisciplinary artist whose bio-technology explorations range through the manipulation of human tissue to the levitation of objects (also laced with human tissue), playing with pop culture along the way.

As the commissioned curator for Salamanca Arts Centre’s 2016 major exhibition, which she titled New Alchemists, Alicia King brings together investigative experimental artists from Australia and beyond whose practice, like her own, ruptures borders and barriers of art and science.

Ideas of ‘alchemy’ can be traced to the ancients and have been practiced with differing foci across civilisations from the far and near East, Egypt and, since the Renaissance, in Europe. ‘Alchemy’ is now defined at its most reductive as ‘any magical power or process’ or ‘any magical power or process of transmuting a common substance, usually of little value, into a substance of great value’. (Dictionary.com, July 2016) as ‘a form of chemistry and speculative philosophy’ or ‘any magical power or process of transmuting a common substance, usually of little value, into a substance of great value’. Who then are the ‘new alchemists’ with their contemporary practices, and processes, embracing unorthodoxies and possibilities. Their investigative practices bring us ‘new alchemies’, playful, un-nerving and confronting ideas of transmutation and possible futures.

The artists demonstrate Anker’s ideas of inter-disciplinary categories emerge from the genre. These sub-genres take into consideration allied practices necessary to transform matter on a molecular level:

- Imagery garnered through methods such as MRI, atomic force microscopy, electrophoresis, gene sequencing and PCR technologies. Images of chromosomes, body scans, genotypic and phenotypic variations, and laboratory-fabricated animals enter the domain of image-making. They can be found in painting, sculpture, photography, video, music and theatre.
- The incorporation of 3D computer-modelling software, artificial life, robotics, biodegradable scaffolding and an interest in emergent theories of life as subject matter for new media installations, rapid prototype sculpture and algorithmic codes.
- The inclusion of wet laboratory practices such as tissue engineering, the cloning of animal and plant cells, transgenic microorganisms and ecological investigations. Artists now employ living matter as their medium.

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- The inclusion of wet laboratory practices such as tissue engineering, the cloning of animal and plant cells, transgenic microorganisms and ecological investigations. Artists now employ living matter as their medium.

Among key questions Anker poses in her article, she asks ‘Can the philosophical questions bio art raises be embedded in visual art scenarios?’

She further notes: “Bio artists and designers often engage in collaborative processes, sharing ideas, methods and perspectives. Often enough, teams combine scientists, visual artists, designers, computer software specialists, photographers, dancers, actors, philosophers, physicians, technicians, anthropologists and writers. There are many cases of successful collaborative experiences. Additionally, this status of unorthodox practice can garner results through chance and achieve recognition outside of traditional scientific methods.”

New Alchemists curator Alicia King challenges, enchants and stimulates viewers to think and wonder with her invited artists: Art Orienté Objet; Michaela Gleave; Ian Haig, Oron Catts & Ionat Zurr with Corrie Van Sice, Nadege Philippe-Janon; Thomas Thwaites; and Lu Yang.

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NEW ALCHEMYSTES

Since 2007 a number of biological words have been removed from the Junior Oxford Dictionary, in favour of technological terms. This removal of the names of natural organisms, including pasture, fern, chestnut, ivy, and nectar, amongst many others, points to a broad and increasing sense of disconnection with the natural environment and one’s felt presence within it. Language forms the basis of understanding and ability to engage, physically and conceptually. Without the language to identify our natural understanding and ability to engage, we are dislocated from our experience of the natural world and our internal conceptualisation of it. So too, a disconnect with our idea of the body and its role as a resource of raw materials for industry. That this is not a new idea makes it all the more pertinent. New Alchemists brings together artists exploring these growing perceptual disconnects, collapsing our sense of familiarity with, and preconceived otherness from the world around us to engage in the practice of making meaning in an increasingly technologised world. These explorations take the form of interactions with species, technologies and phenomena beyond our experience of being human. Within the works is an embedded desire to delve beyond the human, from the micro to the macro scale. Looking into the body, and beyond to the cosmos, New Alchemists explores diverse approaches to our changing concepts of life, from the machinic to the visceral.

Video piece Lu Yang Delusional Mandala places the artist in an alternative, technologically mediated reality. Transformed as a virtual future humanoid, Yang appropriates tools and principles of neuroscience to tel-induce delusional hallucinatory states of mind. Her avatar takes on an asexual deity-like form, reinserted into a maniacal parallel pop-culture universe for her own subversive means — free from the constraints of dominant cultural paradigms and scientific limitations. The work resonates a kind of spasmodic technological anxiety — a convulsive subconscious processing of the resonance of mass-technology on the human psyche. Viewed in the context of the body as subject to institutional power, and the artist’s home in communist China, the work can also be read as a reaction to social regulation, undermining a premise of social passivity. The work clames with virtual Yang’s body in a fantasy funeral pyre through which her avatar appears to transition into a new demonic level of existence beyond death.

As a fusion with technology which manifests in the destruction of the virtual self, the piece brings to mind Karen A Frank’s When We Enter Virtual Reality Why Body Do We Leave Behind?, exploring the realities of technological mediation. Frank reminds us that life is lived through the sensorial immersion of bodies. “If the virtual is so physical, what body will I leave behind? Not my physical body. Without it I am in no world at all.”2

Experimentation on one’s own body moves from virtuality to reality in Art Orienté Objet’s May the Horse Live in Me!, a video documenting a blood transfusion artist Marion Laval-Jeantet receives of horse blood. The horse is present in the work with Laval-Jeantet. Filmed in a makeshift laboratory space they walk alongside one another, the artist wearing horse prostheses — emphasising the aspects of ritual and hybridity.

Concerns of anthropocentric barriers between species, and the taxonomical classification of the animal kingdom motivate this experimental work. In an attempt to the absurdity of human hierarchisation that values the survival of certain species over others, Laval-Jeantet has created herself as a new species — the chimerial Centaur — problematic to classification. Originally the work was to involve a transfusion of panda blood, bringing a greater focus on the classification of endangered species brought on by environmental degradation. In this context there is an ever-impending ‘future’, a place of long awaited democratic continuum of science hype — eternally on the brink of an ever-impending ‘future’, a place of long awaited democratic social equilibrium.

There remains, however, a distinct lag in our perception of our environment — an ever growing disconnect between our sense of familiarity with, and preconceived otherness from the world around us to engage in the practice of making meaning in an increasingly technologised world. As we are constantly informed by popular media, ‘life’ as we know it is degraded by new technologies. Advancements in biological technologies stand to have immense influence on the future of the human body, and the manipulation, application, and meaning, of bodily materials. In this context we exist in a continuum of science hype — eternally on the brink of an ever-impending ‘future’, a place of long awaited democratic social equilibrium.

Karen A Frank’s When We Enter Virtual Reality What Body Do We Leave Behind?, in A.D. Profile #118: Architects in Cyberspace, pp.20-23


Made of Stardust encourages us to imagine our inner the stuff of life. The Mechanism of Life — after Stéphane Leduc worked in the early 1900s biologist Stéphane Leduc worked in the matter or experience; a reduction of life to numerical code. Fitzgerald, the work posits data as a substitute for physical and contemporary approaches to life and the universe. A collaboration between Gleave and astronomer Michael Fitzpatrick, with whom Gleave works for physical matter or experience, a reduction of life to numerical code. In the early 1900s biologist Stéphane Leduc worked in the burgeoning field of synthetic biology, exploring the idea of life as a composite of chemical processes — essentially, information — emitting any magic or alchemiacal to the stuff of life. The Mechanism of Life — after Stéphane Leduc is a 3D cell printer that continually prints liquid cells into a production line of matchsticks. These cells, which appear as something we might imagine to be complex components of new organ or tissue building, are in fact simple structures, composed of sodium chloride akin to pigment. They reference what Gron Catts and Ionat Zurr refer to as an Aesthetics of Disappearance— a critical, and necessary response to the onslaught of technological type delivered by industry and mainstream media alike, and that brings us to the widening gap between our conceptions of technological possibilities and their contrasting, complex realities. The technological cleanliness and visual sterilisation of the messiness of organic materials also reflects a mimicking reading of life. We are reminded of the clinical sterilised anonymity of human and animal hosts, transformed through the science laboratory into sterile liquids, pharmaceuticals and vaccines, in an erasure of the visceral, actual, body.

Important, the work also illustrates that binary approaches to life as either magic or mechanism is not contemporary concepts arisen by new technological developments, but have fluctuated throughout history.

In this context, Ian Haig’s Some Thing presents an alternative visual embodiment of Catts and Zurr’s Aesthetics of Disappearance. From the clinical to the visceral, what starts as the result of high tech fashion exposed as crude candy sideshow — decontextualised to reveal the raw material behind the facade of the machine. Some Thing represents the matter of the anonymous, unnameable, unassailable body; in Haig’s own words “a body that slips out of the comfortable category of what we think of as human… the body transformed into an unclassifiable meat… stripped of its exterior shell, or as the Heaven’s Gate cult referred to the body, as a ‘container’9. Perhaps Some Thing is the biotech version of a Gunther von Hagen’s Von Hagen, the specimen — as ‘life’ unveiled in all its visceral glory — albeit in artificial form. Thomas Thwaites’ practice pares back the complex matter of form to discover the inner workings of life and utilitarian technologies. Longing for an alternative connection to the natural environment, beyond the regulation and commodification of daily life, he created a wearable animal other; to move beyond our accessible reality into a space for humans to occupy. Despite its playfulness, the work expresses a desire for connection with a non-human animal other; to move beyond our accessible reality into a space for humans to occupy. Catts discovered in the real-time data the printer reports the real-time data to the natural environment, beyond the regulation and commodification of daily life, he created a wearable animal other; to move beyond our accessible reality into a space for humans to occupy. Despite its playfulness, the work expresses a desire for connection with a non-human animal other; to move beyond our accessible reality into a space for humans to occupy. Despite its playfulness, the work resonates with the sentiment of social anthropologist Roger Caillois’ theory of animal mimicry. Much of human engagement in camouflage, especially in the insect world. Caillois found that some insects that camouflage with nature do not do so for means of survival, as their predators hunt using scent rather than vision. He theorised their behaviour as a psychological, rather than physical adaptation to their environment — a desire to dissolve physically and psychologically into surrounding space.10 Our relationship with natural forces is explored in Nadege Philippe–Janon’s Jerry on the Katabatic Wind. Controlled by data from a custom-made weather station located outside the gallery, the piece translates invisible elemental forces into visual form — in an animated installation piece that establishes a link between cause and effect of outside forces on our everyday lives. Data from the weather station directly influence the animation’s behaviour in ways reminiscent of weather related consequences. For example, heavy rains may manifest a mass of mosquitoes-like forms that fact simple building space, and an almond bloom might cause misplaced tropical temperatures. In this way Jerry on the Katabatic Winds highlights our intrinsic connection to, and reliance upon our surrounding environment, establishing a symbiotic connection between the two.

Despite our best efforts to mediate the dominance and complexity of natural phenomena, our environment is always present — unable to be reckoned from human existence. While we can always revert to nature, no amount of technology allows us to exist without it.

REFERENCES


Katabatic Winds highlights our intrinsic connection to, and reliance upon our surrounding environment, establishing a symbiotic connection between the two. Despite our best efforts to mediate the dominance and complexity of natural phenomena, our environment is always present — unable to be reckoned from human existence. While we can always revert to nature, no amount of technology allows us to exist without it.
Is life immeasurable or are there levels of ‘liveliness’? How should we relate to entities that are not technically alive at all? In a world that is becoming increasingly technologised, questions of what counts as ‘life’ and ‘living’ have attained an unprecedented focus in contemporary philosophical and arts discourse. As Mel Chen acknowledges in Animacies, the “continued rethinking of life and death’s proper boundaries” has increasingly been recognised as a priority in 21st century North American, European and Australasian contexts (2012: 1). Indeed, I would go so far as to argue that the question of life has become the central problematic of recent biopolitics, alongside discussions of scientific ethics and technological/organic power relationships. New Alchemists engages with these issues of biological definitions and birth rights in new and innovative ways, and it does so by evoking contemporary philosophies of life and death and their material transformation — indeed ‘alchemical’ — power of art.

The current ‘new materialism’ and biopolitical focus in art criticism and philosophy has given specific primacy to the matter it measures, how do we make sense of the apparatus’s materiality and its relationship to the objects communicating with us, whether they show us the results we can neither truly ‘fail’ nor ‘succeed’ — they quite simply do not exist. The matterising process itself. Scientific experiments and entanglement that generate materiality in general. Science cannot be objective, or remain outside of the larger construct they investigate. They redefine and emerge through the continual points of connection and entanglement that generate materiality in general. Science thus needs to be rethought (Barad, 2007: 2). It is not an image or objective view of reality, but part of the materialising process itself. Scientific experiments can neither truly ‘fail’ nor ‘succeed’ — they quite simply communicate with us, whether they show us the results we want, or not.

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The duo Art Object Oriented, or in French “Art Orienté Objet” (Marion Laval-Jeantet & Benoit Mangin), aim to use an interdisciplinary approach to expand the amazing ability of art to communicate non-verbally. Through anthropological, environmental or biotechnological experiments, they try to understand the limits of their own conscience. Whether with the traditions of pygmy Bwiti, meditative experiences or horse blood injection, they try to overcome their understanding of the world and to transmit a newly acquired wide-angle vision.

The duo places ecology, defined as the scientific interrogation of the conditions of our existence, at the center of its artistic preoccupations. From the beginning their output has included installation, performance, video, and photography dealing with the various themes around Life. This approach is inclusive enough to have led their work into the domains of biology, behavioral sciences, psychology, ethology leading to poetic and surprising art that is both visionary and political.

The performance May the Horse Live in Me! is an attempt at “bioart” and extreme body art in which the animal foreign body, here the horse, is hybridised with the human body by means of an injection of horse’s blood (plasma). But far from a fatal intrusion, such as that of the mythological hero Midas said to have committed suicide by drinking bull’s blood, the idea was to carry out genuine therapeutic research whereby the horse’s blood has been made compatible thus gaining a saving effect. For this purpose, Marion Laval-Jeantet has tried out on a long period different horse tissue immunoglobulins. The horse immunoglobulins recognise the targeted tissues and induce a functional regulation of these tissues that is specific to them. This ceremony of blood-brotherhood raises a debate on barriers between species and the supposed priority of human on animal concerning Earth resources. A behavioral researcher, a horse and the two protagonists of Art Orienté Objet took part in the one-hour performance in Ljubljana, Slovenia, in February 22, 2011. Prior to the performance, a lead-in time of ten days was necessary for Marion and the horse to get accustomed to one another.

May the Horse Live in Me!, 2011
HD video
24 mins
The Mechanism of Life—after Stephane Leduc, 2013
Custom designed rapid prototype printer, protocol from text published 1911, chemicals and dyes
66 x 45 x 91 cm

At the time that Henri Bergson wrote Creative Evolution and developed the concept of *élan vital* (French for ‘vital force’), a hypothetical force once thought to cause the evolution and development of organisms, others were attempting to dismiss the metaphysical notion. One significant endeavour, taken by Stephane Leduc, set out to prove that life is merely a chemical process. In The Mechanism of Life, published in 1911, Leduc proposed a series of chemical experiments showing the emergence of lifelike phenomena of different degrees of complexity. Using seductive imagery of mainly diffusion and osmosis, Leduc attempted to prove the mechanistic aspects of life and challenge vitalism, a metaphysical theory that the origin and phenomena of life are dependent on non-physical elements. With the recent advent of synthetic biology, where the engineering mindset is set to dominate approaches to life, we see a rehashing of similar stories from a hundred years ago. One such story is the creation of the basic unit of life, the cell, out of non-living materials. The so-called ‘protocells’ are becoming a major field of study, complete with the rhetorical hyperbole about their potential applications.

This piece reappropriates one of the simplest protocell protocols offered by Leduc, working with the diffusion of two concentrations of solutions that create temporary cell-like droplets. The droplets resemble cells with membrane and nuclei, and last for a few moments before succumbing to entropy and dissolving into a murky liquid.

This protocol is automated using another currently hyped technology: 3-dimensional printing. Heralded as the next industrial revolution, there is much discussion about 3D printing technology; something that parallels the assembly line of Fordism at the time Leduc was working on The Mechanism of Life. The promise of 3D printing technology is based on information transfer, as with the business model; the focus is on the instructions and the data as the currency, while the materiality is merely an optional manifestation. This is problematic as, simultaneously, the 3D printing industry suggests the ability to print actual life, or at least parts of the living. This very seductive scenario of printing life from scratch is played off in this work against the unstable, uncontrollable and transient nature of the protocell droplets as a material.

To a large extent, this piece deals with issues of cultural amnesia and reimagining; pointing attention to the use of certain visuals and expressions to persuade, hype, and then disappoint. In a time when the idea of creating synthetic life is at the forefront, it is important to culturally probe current and past approaches to the idea of The Mechanism of Life. The printed ‘protocells’ are unstable and temporary, take on forms that appear organic and then disappear. More than a proof on the mechanism of life, they are a suggestion for a humble approach to the question of what life is and how far we are willing to make life into a raw material for our own ends.
Some Thing represents the unclassifiable body, a body that slips out of the comfortable category of what we think of as human. In an attempt to describe accurately what this pulsating mass of melted flesh, bone and guts actually is, the title Some Thing seems like an appropriate starting point. It is a body that was possibly once human and is now on its way to being something else, transformed into another thing. Then again this thing could be sub-human or post-human. We can’t quite be sure.

Some Thing is perhaps a creature without a species, an aberration of flesh, guts and gristle. It is what William S. Burroughs refers to as un-D.T. — Undifferentiated Tissue — a condition whereby the body and its flesh liquefies and transforms into a new form, literally seeing parts of the body consume itself with its own flesh. With this in mind, the notion of the body in a state of transmutation is central to the work.

Some Thing is about the body transformed into unclassifiable meat, the body as a form of raw and exposed gristle, fat, bone and muscle, stripped of its exterior shell or as the Heaven’s Gate cult referred to the body as ‘a container’. The body lays pathetically exposed, vulnerable and possibly in some kind of pain, or then again maybe this body is only half alive or possibly being born, trapped in a state between life and death.

Some Thing references the teratological body, the body turned inside out, its internal viscera exposed or appearing in places that it shouldn’t, the body engulfed by its own flesh, mutated like a DNA experiment that has gone horribly, horribly wrong. Welcome to the Future.
My creative process stems from a drive to explore the possibilities of manipulating physical materials as well as animation, video, light, technology, and sound. My studio acts as a laboratory where I experiment with materials and mechanisms, and seek to locate connections and blur lines between organic and artificial, climate and culture, macro and micro, chaos and control. Substances might be surrendered to the element of chance, exposed to heat or liquids; amplifying systems and processes such as growth and decay.

The resulting installations are usually contingent on the spaces they inhabit, evolving into strange miniature ecosystems that intermingle with their surrounding environments. Within these assemblages, projected animations highlight layers of physical ephemera and collected detritus such as rocks, water, plastic tubes, magnets and discarded electronics, inviting investigation into the relationships, expectations and attributes of raw and synthetic forms.

In Jerry on the Katabatic Wind, the external environment also plays a role in shaping the work, as the animations are driven by a small weather station that has been set up outside near the gallery space. Control has been given, in some part, to non-human influences, to the natural elements of the weather, and to the mechanical processes that translate the real-time weather data into behaviours for the animation.

Although they are controlled by the elements, the animations don’t depict specific changes in climate conditions. Rather, they are reminiscent of weather-related consequences; if it’s raining outside there might be an increase in mosquito-like forms, or unseasonably warm weather might manifest an algal bloom. The animations and installation are in a state of flux, presenting viewers with an ever-shifting experience of the work.

Jerry on the Katabatic Wind has been created in collaboration with artist, technological tinkerer, and academic Bill Hart, with technical assistance from Morgan Hart. A soundscape has also been created by musician and composer Leni Philippe-Janon, who has responded to the objects and materials, and the rhythm of the light and animations of the work in its development.

Jerry on the Katabatic Wind (detail), 2016
Cross-media installation
Dimensions variable
The World Arrives at Night (Star Printer) prints data relating to one star per minute of stars as they appear over the horizon for the location of the object. Astronomically correct, the work tracks the rotation of the Earth, a waterfall of paper documenting the movements of the sky as time continues to compress in the paper stack on the floor. Programmed to operate indefinitely, the work is a collaboration between artist Michaela Gleave and astronomer Michael Fitzgerald and combines a shared interest in the mechanisms of the universe and the human construction of understanding.

Monitoring the movement of the stars for as long as the object is left to run The World Arrives at Night (Star Printer) dissolves the distinctions between day and night, documenting stars both visible and invisible to the human eye. The information presented is from the Hipparchos catalogue, a high-precision data set collected by the European Space Agency’s satellite telescope of the same name, which orbited the Earth between 1989 and 1993. It remains the most accurate listing of stellar positions to date. The data being reproduced include: the distance the star is away from our Sun; the brightness of the star as perceived from Earth as well as its actual luminosity; the constellation within which the star appears; and the star’s spectral type, which is an indication of its age, size, and chemical composition.

We Are Made of Stardust is a large billboard-like structure, installed in the gallery with its back to the viewer. Washing the surrounding space with over-saturated light, the LEDs on the face of the object display the work’s title as they scroll continuously through the colours of the rainbow. Dripping with wiring and exposing all of its mechanisms, the object faces away from us, the sensation of colour being the initial experience of the work. It is only when navigating around the work that the text is revealed; its poetry a meditation on the vastness of existence and wonder at our place within it.

Built as a makeshift structure, and mimicking the facades of consumerism, We Are Made of Stardust exists almost as a forgotten relic, the means of creation raw and exposed, with no effort made to conceal the mechanics. Flawed, like a billboard seen up close, or an aging piece of signage, the work contrasts the finitude of the effects and materials of its construction with the deep time of the particles that compose not just it, but ourselves, and everything around us.

Referencing moments of expansion, when the limits of one’s world view are catapulted outwards to encompass previous unimagined scales of experience, We Are Made of Stardust extends upon the use of shifting senses of magnitude within Gleave’s work. Oscillating between the micro and macro the reception of the work remains open to the viewer. The text could be interpreted with the optimism and romance of separated lovers viewing the same sky, or with sublime emptiness in the face of finitude and ultimate meaninglessness.
It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is only because they only know their own side of the question.
—John Stuart Mill, Utilitarianism (1863)

Wouldn’t it be nice to take a holiday from being a human? A holiday from the existential angst, worry and stress of life as a self-aware mortal being. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to enjoy fresh green grass, to gallop across the landscape, to be free from time?

Yes. So, I tried to become a goat.

This involved, amongst other things, visiting shamans, undergoing trans-cranial magnetic stimulation in order to interrupt the speech pathways of my brain, dissecting a goat at the Royal Veterinary College, commissioning a Doctor of Prosthetics to make me some goat legs, and finally joining a herd of goats in the Swiss Alps.

But despite our common ancestry, the differences between us and our Capra cousins are too great to overcome with today’s technology. But perhaps one day, humankind’s ancient dream of becoming a non-human animal will be achieved, and the post-human era will have begun.

The project was supported by a small arts award from the Wellcome Trust.
Lu Yang created a digital, non-sexual human simulation in her own image initially to complete an artwork. Because of the powerful ‘curse’ in the content of the work, she had to apply a spell to herself to avoid harming others.

Lu Yang Delusional Mandala is all about neuroscience, a continuing area of interest for the artist. Yang makes use of the principle of the stereotactic system, deep brain stimulation and Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (RTMS) to the deep limbic system in order to extend delusions, substituting religious perspective and fugacious meditation on the material world to produce ‘objective’ delusions.

Lu Yang Delusional Mandala is Yang’s reflection on her creation in the past, present and future. Does consciousness ‘adhere’ to the brain? Where on earth is consciousness? Yang simulates the delusions of damaging herself and her works continuously in her work. Will the delusions eventually become real?

Lu Yang Delusional Mandala is the second iteration in Yang’s new series of works, the first being Moving God. This series is particularly concerned with religion and neuroscience, and uses meditation methods and scientific practice to delicately construct this Delusional Mandala.

Among their recent solo shows figure Microbiota, Musée de Dole, France (2016), Andachtsraum, La Maréchalerie, de Dole, France (2016), and their research in this domain was awarded a Golden Nica at Ars Electronica for the project May the Horse Live in Me!, performed the same year in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

ORON CATTS (AUS)
IONAT ZURR (AUS) & CORRIE VAN SICE (USA)

ORON CATTS is co-founder and director of Symbiotica, The Centre of Excellence in Biological Arts in the School of Anatomy, Physiology and Human Biology at the University of Western Australia. He is an artist, researcher and curator at the forefront of the emerging field of biological arts, whose work addresses shifting perceptions of life. Dr. Ionat Zurr is an artist, researcher and the Academic Coordinator at Symbiotica. CATTS and ZURR formed the internationally renowned Tissue Culture and Art Project (TC&A) in 1996. They are considered pioneers in the field of biological arts and publish widely, exhibit internationally and their work has been collected by MoMA, New York.

Corrie Van Sice is a creative researcher and engineer. She develops technologies through partnerships with biologists, artists and designers. Her work applies concepts of bio- art to the production of fabrication methodologies, which identify the inherent potential for matter to become functional, and human curiosity’s creative influence on natural systems. Corrie earned her Masters at New York University’s Interactive Telecommunications Program, where she proclamed “centering the recent Clipboard” and worked as Materials and Processes Engineer at the popular 3D printing company, MakerBot Industries. Corrie has also worked as a synthetic biologist at Brooklyn’s citizen science lab Genspace, and began work with CATTS and ZURR via the Finnish Bioart Society at the Kilpisjärvi Biological Station in 2011.

IAN HAI (TAS)

IAN HAI works across media, from video, sculpture, drawing, technology-based media and installation. His practice refutes the idea that the low and the base level are devoid of value and cultural meaning. His body-obsessed themes can be seen throughout a large body of work over the last twenty years. Previous works have looked to the contemporary media sphere and its relationship to the visceral body, the degenerative aspects of pervasive new technologies, to cultural forms of fanatism and cults, to ideas of attraction and repulsion, body horror and the defamiliarisation of the human body. His work has been exhibited in galleries and media festivals around the world including exhibitions at: Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne, Ian Potter Museum of Art, Melbourne, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide; Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, Museum of Modern Art, New York. Artic Biennale, Nagoya, Japan, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Art Museum of China, Beijing, Museum Villa Rot, Burgrieden-Rot, Germany. In addition, his video work has screened in over 120 festivals internationally. In 2003 he received a fellowship from the New Media Arts Board of the Australian Council and in 2013 he curated the video art show Unco at the Torrance Art Museum in Los Angeles.

NADEGE PHILIPPE-JANON (TAS)

After commencing her studies in Environmental Science, Nadege went on to complete a Bachelor of Fine Art at the Queensland College of Art and in 2013 received First Class Honours at the same institution. Since graduating, Nadege has exhibited in group and solo shows across Australia and internationally including with Tenjinyama Gallery (Japan), Contemporary Art Tasmania and the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art. In 2015 Nadege received an internship with the BioArt and Sculpture Park (GASPi) assisting artist Natalie Jeremijenko with her project Ambipohibious Architecture. Most recently Nadege received an Asialink grant supported by Arts Tasmania for a residency at Tenjinyama Studio, Japan, and has received a Marie Edwards Travelling Scholarship to complete a residency at GASP! Sculpture Park in the USA.

NADEGE PHILIPPE-JANON is a creative artist currently living and working in Sydney. Born in remote central Australia and growing up under the dark skies of rural North West Tasmania, Michaela’s conceptually driven practice examines the formation of reality across an extended range of perceptual and intellectual frameworks. Spanning digital and online works, installation, performance, photography, sculpture and video, her projects question the interface to time, matter and space, focusing in particular on the changing intersections between art, science, society and the history of human knowledge. Returning frequently to the space of the sky as a site for inquiry Michaela’s projects often reference natural phenomena and tricks of perception, looking to the edges of experience as a means of better understanding the structural frameworks that shape our knowledge of the universe. Often temporal, Michaela’s works oscillate between the micro and the macro, between the spaces of personal experience and global understanding, allowing us to experience the processes by which we comprehend reality and rethink our presence within it.

MICHAELA GLEAVE (TAS)

Michaela Gleave is a contemporary artist currently living and working in Sydney. Born in remote central Australia and growing up under the dark skies of rural North West Tasmania, Michaela’s conceptually driven practice examines the formation of reality across an extended range of perceptual and intellectual frameworks. Spanning digital and online works, installation, performance, photography, sculpture and video, her projects question the interface to time, matter and space, focusing in particular on the changing intersections between art, science, society and the history of human knowledge. Returning frequently to the space of the sky as a site for inquiry Michaela’s projects often reference natural phenomena and tricks of perception, looking to the edges of experience as a means of better understanding the structural frameworks that shape our knowledge of the universe. Often temporal, Michaela’s works oscillate between the micro and the macro, between the spaces of personal experience and global understanding, allowing us to experience the processes by which we comprehend reality and rethink our presence within it.

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MICHAELA GLEAVE (CONT.)

Michaela Gleave’s work has been presented extensively across Australia as well as in Germany, Greece, Austria, Hong Kong, South Korea, Japan, Iceland, the United States and Mexico. She has participated in residency programs at the International Studio and Curatorial Program in New York City, Tokyo Wonder Site in Japan, and was a resident artist with CSIRO Astronomy and Space Science during 2012-13. She won the 2015 Churchie National Emerging Art Prize and was awarded a prestigious Creative Australia Fellowship from the Australia Council for the Arts (2013). Her exhibitions include: 2016 Bristol Biennial; in Other Worlds, Bristol, UK, 2016; Trace: Performance and its Documents, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2014; The List, Campbelltown Arts Centre, Sydney, 2014; A Day is Longer than a Year (solo), Fremantle Arts Centre, Western Australia, 2013, The Perfect Mammal (solo) Performance Space, Sydney, 2012; We Are Made of Stardust (solo) as part of Art Futures, Hong Kong Art Fair, 2012, Octopus 11: The Matter of Air, Gertrude Contemporary, Melbourne, 2011, A Perfect Day to Chase Tornadoes (White) at the Kunstquartier Bethanien, Berlin, 2010, and Primavera 09, Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, the Science Museum, London, and the Zero 1 Biennial (California). The Victoria & Albert Museum recently acquired some of his work for their permanent collection.

Press includes features in national newspapers including the New York Times, Sued Detcse and The Financial Times. He has presented a four part television series, aired on Discovery Channel Asia Pacific.

He is the author of two books. His first book, The Toaster Project, published by Princeton Architectural Press to critical acclaim, has now been translated in to Korean and Japanese editions. His second book, GoatMan, written about his project to take a holiday from being human by becoming a goat, was published in 2016, and so far has been well received.

THOMAS THWAITES (GBR)

Thomas Thwaites is a designer (of a more speculative sort), interested in the societal impacts of science, technology and economics. He holds a MA in Design Interactions from University College London. He is the author of two books. His first book, The Toaster Project, published by Princeton Architectural Press to critical acclaim, has now been translated in to Korean and Japanese editions. His second book, GoatMan, written about his project to take a holiday from being human by becoming a goat, was published in 2016, and so far has been well received.

LU YANG (CHN)

Lu Yang’s work is armed with an overlaying mix of strategies taken from science, religion, psychological, neuroscience, medicine, games, pop culture and music. She highlights the biological and material determinants of our condition reminding us of our transient and fragile existence, but with an edge of dark humour that leaves no room for sentimentality.

Lu Yang’s work has been featured in important solo and group exhibitions at Montreal 3rd International Digital Art Biennial, the Venice Biennale - Chinese Pavilion (2015), the 6th Moscow Biennale, Kassel Fridericianum Museum, the 5th Fukuoka Asian Art Triennale, UCCA, Beijing, Centre Pompidou, Paris, and Shanghai Biennale (2012). Lu Yang currently splits her time between Beijing and Shanghai.

His projects are exhibited frequently and internationally, including at the National Museum of China, the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Seoul, the Science Museum (London), and the Zero 1 Biennial (California). The Victoria & Albert Museum recently acquired some of his work for their permanent collection.

Press includes features in national newspapers including the New York Times, Sued Detcse and The Financial Times. He has presented a four part television series, aired on Discovery Channel Asia Pacific.

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NEW ALCHEMISTS

Long Gallery, Salamanca Arts Centre
23 July–28 August 2016
Exhibition opened by David Bartlett, 22 July 2016

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SALAMANCA ARTS CENTRE

Salamanca Arts Centre (SAC) is Tasmania’s creative hub, and
an engine-room for connecting the arts, artists, and arts-based
businesses with national and international audiences, peers,
communities and opportunities.

Salamanca Arts Centre’s Mission is to demonstrate and promote
an inclusive culture that creates and develops opportunities for
artists, audiences and artforms.

The premier state multi-arts centre, SAC is a base for artists-in-
studios, home to many of Tasmania’s leading arts organisations
across performing arts, film and writing, and cultural and
commercial galleries for visual arts, crafts and design.

Salamanca Arts Centre delivers significant visual and performing
arts programs and projects in Tasmania and beyond, and provides
development, training, facilities and services to artists, arts
技术人员, arts organisations, arts businesses and arts events.

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MICHAELA GLEAVE
THOMAS THWAITES
LU YANG

CURATED BY DR ALICIA KING
LONG GALLERY
23 JULY–28 AUGUST 2016