

# a Brief History of the Future

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# a Brief History of the Future

**Sonia Fernández Pan**

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## The Future: Strategies to Approach Something that Doesn't Exist Yet

When I was a child I wanted to be many things when I grew up. Seen from a distance, and from the viewpoint of social ethics, perhaps too many. If it's true that memory doesn't deceive us, I remember that I changed my mind regarding my future with shocking ease. Shocking when we think how hard we find it to wish for risky or ludicrous situations as we grow up, but not so for the capriciousness of childhood. I suppose that back then, being unfaithful to one's own decisions and beliefs wasn't frowned upon the way it is now that one is, or should be, an adult. Within that whole list of wishes for the future, the imagination wasn't as free as it likes to appear. At the end of the day, when we're asked what we want to be when we grow up, we always respond with a word that refers to a trade or a profession. And out of these, we mention one that we know well, or that we have heard about before. Almost no one thinks to wish they could be, for example, a planet, a colour, or a tree by the time they're thirty.

So, my list of goals for the future contained the following professions: astronaut, supermarket cashier, archaeologist, hairdresser, fighter plane pilot, vet, astronomer (I used to confuse it with astrologist and the teachers would laugh at me), builder, painter, mathematician, and, closer to my teens, a vampire. More than aspiring to be a vampire, I fantasised with

"I'll make my report as if I told a story, for I was taught as a child on my homeworld that Truth is a matter of the imagination." Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*

the possibility of choosing a permanent age, as well as deciding on the moment of my own death. This sort of rejuvenated-but-limited-eternity reminds me of a Russian project from 1922, the Bio-Cosmic Immortalists, who were more mature in their judgment when they called for a utopian desire reminiscent of science fiction at a time when science fiction was just a tiny hint of the literature that was yet to come.

Analysed from the perspective of a future that will also come to pass, this inventory of professions was the symptom of an absence: that of a professional hierarchy within a society where professions provide symbolic capital, sometimes in a compensatory manner, and establish a distribution of social class according to this attributed value. I also remember that my parents had a children's encyclopaedia at home – when encyclopaedias were still useful and respectable – with a specific volume dedicated to professions for adult life. Each entry in the encyclopaedia was marked by several symbols, amongst them one that indicated whether professions were suitable for men or women. Whilst, being a girl, many were forbidden to me, boys only had one prohibition for their future: to assist women in childbirth. One of the first acts of conscious rebellion against patriarchal and heteronormative society was, specifically, to wish more than ever to become an astronomer, a builder, or an astronaut. A wish that prolonged itself in time, as I analysed university degrees according to whether they were chosen by men or women, under the stubborn intention to be an exception to the gender norms in the world at large, and the academic field in particular. But my inconsistency reared its head again, forming an alliance with my teenage passion for dead languages, leading to a personal project that still exists in the latent state of a utopia: to speak Ancient Greek and Latin as fluently as it was spoken thousands of years ago.

As we grow up, childhood fantasies dilute in the vulgar dimension of a reality that demands we get used to some of its pre-existing patterns. Even without believing in fate, said patterns work in a similar way: as a (un) known force that inevitably acts upon people and events. Perhaps becoming an adult means realising that only cautious and reasonable dreams come true. Maybe becoming an adult means that projections into the future are formidably reduced once we see that desire, when uncontrolled by rules, is seen as something negative and harmful, to be avoided at all costs. Desire is a double-edged sword for a society constructed upon the fiction of an ideal order that is presented as natural, in a world that just about survives within chaos. On the one hand, it exists as a generator of alternative possibilities; on the other, it is the receiver of subtle manipulations from a system that includes us through exclusion and adaptation. How much of us is there in the desires that we recognise as belonging to us? How much of us is there in what belongs to us? Out of all the futures that we are capable of imagining, why is it that none manages to free itself completely from the reality we know? What is the power of an imagination that is guided by those in power?

If I were to trace a personal archaeology of the future, the idea of a time machine would come up quite quickly. This time-travel device provoked one of the first crises in my understanding of the world that I can recall, even if on a fictional plane. As an indicative of the difficulty to project ourselves forward, it was already easier then for me to travel backward to

“Time is simultaneous, an intricately structured jewel that humans insist on viewing one edge at a time, when the hole design is visible in every facet”. Dave Gibbons & Alan Moore, *Watchmen*

some of the moments supposedly already inhabited by humanity, than to jump prospectively in time. To construct can be more complicated than to reconstruct. Nevertheless, the matter I was completely obsessed with wasn't the fact I could choose between past and future, but which past and which future to select. The time machines that did exist, even hypothetically, always thought there was a single past or a single future to access from a single present. Splitting time into its smallest possible units, the question I asked myself was: Which moment should I choose? Which century, which year, which day, what time, which minute? Which nanosecond should I suddenly appear in, like an alien landing on a planet he thinks he knows, but which doesn't know him? The possibility of choosing from the totality of time and its potential side effects on the development of reality gave me a level of vertigo that is comparable to the possibility of choosing a celestial body out of the totality of the universe, entering into a sort of time-space melancholy that still persists when I think about it. I entertained myself with these doubts; one of the most exquisite ways to waste time, even with time as its core subject.

Seeing as time machines, as presented in fantasy literature, don't exist, a way of including them in my life was to turn objects into mnemonic devices. My inclination towards a personal chronology through objects was thus born, like an outdated mark on an intermittent and partial timeline. More than remembering the past through different material objects which added layers of meaning to a mutating identity, I focused my energy on throwing myself at the future with them. For example, when my parents bought a piece of furniture, my thoughts condensed on a single idea: Where will I be; what will I be doing, and what will reality be like when the life that this piece of furniture shares with my parents comes to an end?

It was the same with my personal objects. Every article of clothing I bought was the promise of an almost supernatural imposition: the existence of another place within the time-space line that had my name on it. Years later, Deleuze, who was in demand in a future where he had been dead for years, would add desire to the list of immaterial things we acquire when we buy something. To buy a pair of shoes, and at the same time, buy all the potential situations where we would like to wear those shoes, an entire string of projections that could even include people or places we don't yet know.

By distorting the common use of many objects, I realised that they became time capsules capable of working not just in the past tense, but also as a prediction of something that would probably never happen as I had imagined. If projection and desire emerge thanks to the idea of the future, what will really happen – the event – inhabits the future, a place we cannot know from the present, but that we can perhaps handle through intuition, that form of knowledge where some parts of our accumulated experience are instantly activated.

While it is true that we cannot live the future, and even if we can entertain ourselves by living in it, it is possible to generate strategies to bring it back to our present. One of them would consist of altering the pre-established order of events: to write our obituary or that of someone who isn't dead yet, to read the second part of a book without having read the first, to publish a biography with things we will have done in a few years' time, to write a letter as a response to another

"The precog sees a variety of futures, laid out side by side like cells in a beehive. For him one has greater luminosity, and this he picks. (...) The anti-precog makes all futures seem equally real to the precog; he aborts his talent to choose at all." Philip K Dick, *Ubik*

we haven't received yet, to build objects in a society that is yet to come. Another tactic is to see the difference between time zones as a distortion of time frames, so we could send messages from the future to someone living in an earlier time zone.

In addition to these tactics embedded in our routine of the world, there are other more theoretical and explicit future forms that make up our present, a time that tries to survive in between our obsession for the past and our nostalgia for what we don't know yet. For many years, dodging the present became one of my favourite subterfuges. Hiding from the present, I would desert a responsibility I hadn't asked for: my own future. I would go about it in various ways. Through absence, withdrawing into my own biography thanks to an extraordinary memory that could travel down a fictitious straight line to reach my earliest memories; or through excess, experiencing the continuous present in sessions of electronic music that came with a guarantee: that infinity – even as an illusion – is possible. I also escaped it by sleeping way more than needed or tirelessly reading until literature stopped making sense. What I saw as a personal defect (the panic about a future that didn't seem to have room for me, but plenty for others) took many years to show itself as what it was: the common problem of an era that had failed to fulfil all the promises we were made as children and adolescents. For those of us who were born in the eighties, progress and development impregnated an idea of the future that we now see as utilitarian, adulterated and rushed. No one told us then that we would have to live with the notion of the project and its unstable urgency to exist in the vicinity of a future that has exchanged the dream of utopia for the illusory deadline of the event.

They say the best utopias are those that fail. Perhaps because they show the exuberance of an imagination that ignores

what it is feasible to desire. If the idea that the mind has no room for anything that doesn't derive from our senses were true, science fiction would have never existed. But the problem lies not in the survival of utopia in fiction, but its disrepute as a valid political form in what we consider to be reality. In a future imposed by an ideological system – capitalism in all its variations – that has no enemies left, utopia is more important than ever. Because when it disappears, we fall into the vertigo of a «no future» that no longer contains punk's rebellion, only its hangover. If it is true that art, just like utopia, is the result of a dissatisfaction produced in us by the world, its demise will also be the end of a debt: the one the future owes all of us. It makes me think, however, that for many, this would be a terrible dystopia: an absolutely satisfying world, a happy world, but a world without art.

"The unique value of the Utopian text also lies in its function as a memory trace, but as a message from the future, something foreshadowed in distorted form by all the great scriptures, which give themselves as messages of otherness, but transmitted in the past." Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future*

### Biography

A while back, they used to say that you only live once. This anachronistic commonplace leads to another one, which assured us that a cat had seven lives. While the former was based on undeniable fact, the latter was a deceitful claim to say that some animals have a more audacious and intrepid spirit than others. Sonia was born when both commonplaces were in full force. Back then human beings could only enjoy a single timeline that confirmed that freedom – as the choice of something – always results in omission – as the exclusion of something else –.

At some point in her existence, Sonia acquired the ability to distribute her life across several timelines connected by a Jonbar Point. This multiple catalyst allowed her to develop all the intentions, promises, and desires that couldn't be explored in a single life. It provided the possibility to test out different identities and bodies through each life, a possibility she then used to develop an experiment: to generate two parallel lives, as a man in one, and as a woman in another. At present, through another timeline, she is working as a researcher, collecting experiences and conclusions from said experiment. The results of this will be made public in the next Conference for Identity Coexistence, when all the timelines will be joined together for a few hours.

# **Interviews**

**by Sonia Fernández Pan**

# Basel Abbas & Ruanne Abou-Rahme

## The Radical Reinvention of Our Present

SFP Fredric Jameson says that utopia always exists latently but that it can only be materialised in the «real» world under certain conditions. From this perspective, is there any project you'd like to carry out but you consider somehow utopian?

BA-RA The utopian impulse we feel is not really related to a particular project but more about being able to project an end to the capitalist-colonial present: Of course that also means, as an artist, to not be totally enslaved to this market and to this economy. What defines much of our practice is a search for a means to radically re-imagine our way of being, living and relating to the world.

We've just finished writing a text on the idea of «hacking the image» in the sense that it has a latent utopian impulse; it's very contradictory to the extent that we're still totally dependent on a system where we have to produce scarcity out of our work. We have to sell ourselves to collectors or institutions to survive.

SFP In *The Incidental Insurgents* there's a change in your artistic trajectory. Whereas, in previous works, you explored the impact of political structures on society and on the individual, in this project you propose investigation – like a detective – into your own artistic practice. Usually the process happens the other way round; it's in their initial works where artists analyse their own condition and situation. Where does this change come from?

BA-RA *The Incidental Insurgents* is the first project where we're more evident as actors or characters in the work, but the heart of the project is the search for a different political language in this contemporary moment. It's our most personal project in the sense that it was important for us to directly question our

position as artists at a time of crisis. But the heart of the project is not an investigation into our artistic practice; it could be us, it could be anyone else, we happen to be artists. Of course, compared to the other works, it's perhaps the most personal work in the sense that it gives you an insight into our process.

SFP Regarding your assimilation between the artist and the bandit (of the artist with the bandit), if we consider that most art operates as an ally of the capitalist system and also that the condition of an «outsider artist» is a kind of simulacrum, what are the strategies that allow an artist to become a bandit? Is a collective form of resistance possible, instead of an individual one?

BA-RA The first step is to get beyond yourself as an artist; the whole notion of the artist has to somehow be destroyed. We need to recognise our enslavement to institutions, collectors, patrons and gallery owners. We have to begin to see what we do as a form of labour rather than just a form of creative expression. What is the real exchange that's taking place between you as an artist and the institutions, let alone the market? We believe it's essential to recognise the limitations of only positioning yourself as an artist; and that's precisely recognising how you're implicated and embroiled in a total capitalist system, you as an artist are not an exception. We feel that we need to really try to get past the contemporary construction of the «artist» because it can really confine and limit what kind of forms, strategies and actions you can take. Once we arrive there and get past ourselves as «artists», the idea of anonymity becomes a very critical thing.

SFP *The Incidental Insurgents* proposes a definition of the present as a time «of full radical potential and disillusionment,

in continual search for a language for the moment». How does this radical potential manifest itself? Is artistic language obsolete in relation to the current state of the world?

BA-RA If artistic language remains in the directions it's going in, then yes, it does become obsolete if it's not addressing the urgencies that people are experiencing daily. In a sense it's part of why question ourselves in *The Incidental Insurgents* because, if you're not getting to the urgencies that people are experiencing, then what is it you're doing? And if you're engaging with the urgencies but only within these art spaces then, again, what are you doing? So, on the one hand, yes, it's in danger of becoming totally obsolete. On the other hand it has the potential to really be a space to imagine new forms of being. It does have that potential but only if it's surpassing itself, if it's moving beyond itself as art. It's a question of a much wider intersection of people. You see the radical potential in a riot in Ferguson, in a demonstration in Nablus or in Cairo. You glimpse it in all these moments when people are demanding power and there have been many moments like that in the past three or four years.

SFP *The Zone* is a previous project that demonstrates how desire is manipulated to hide the specific present situation in Palestine. The colonisation of desire – and hence of the future – appears to be analogous to the colonisation of space and territory. Is desire turning into a dystopia?

BA-RA To a certain extent, yes. The manufactured desire that projects certain ways of living and relating to the world are very dystopian if you also follow their logic or their future vision (or their lack of future vision). There's a lot of production of desire now that's very dystopian because it's extremely atomised and it's very much based on materialistic things.

It's different today than say 60 years ago (in the west), where there was always a much more pronounced intersection between the notion of community, civility, society, ethics, etc. It was then still used, of course, within a capitalist discourse but you still had those nodes. You don't even have that now. What you're left with is just the outer shell, the basic desire for consumption, and that consumption is no longer even validated through all those ethical and wider social and communal codes. You express yourself through what you consume and purchase; that's the highest point of your expression. And at the same time, structurally, you're living in incredibly precarious conditions; you don't have any security. This is the age of extreme anxiety and so it's dystopian.

SFP Development and progress have historically marked the perception of the future. When dream becomes nightmare it's no longer possible to believe in the promise of future improvement. How do dreams arise or sustain themselves in a disastrous situation?

BA-RA The promise of the future clearly is the first victim during disastrous situations. All the more reason why it becomes absolutely necessary to imagine a different way of living and of course all the more difficult. In a disastrous situation, the dream of «progress» becomes the nightmare and the possibility of activating a new world may be all you have left. Precisely because the current order of things and the system we live under is very much hinged upon suspending that possibility of imagining other ways of living, so it actually becomes, in a way, the first terrain you have to reclaim, the first step you have to take to reconfigure a resistant imaginary.

SFP In your work, the notion of an archive is very important. An archive is an apparatus which is created and developed considering (in relation to) the future. Like a library, an archive isn't a neutral organisational mechanism of the world. Thinking about future archaeologists, what would be their possible conclusions regarding our present archive? How do you conceive of the notion of an archive in this time of information overload?

BA-RA The internet is an immense and growing archive that opens up the possibility for ordinary people to actively bear witness to the events happening around them, from the mundane to the seminal. This unofficial, unorganised and underestimated archive both questions and subverts the logic of official archives that are always constituted through degrees of exclusion and repression. At the contemporary moment, the position of an artist as an archivist no longer seen as so important as it once was. In fact it has never been more evident that everyone is an archivist of sorts. We could even argue that the activist-as-archivist has replaced the artist-as-archivist. It is this very possibility for everyone to be an archivist that is radically reshaping the archives to come. It is also profoundly reshaping concepts of the self.

At the same time, the excess of information, perpetually being replaced by newer information, produces amnesia, an incomprehensibility where everything is in danger of being doomed to be lost and forgotten in the black hole of the web. Significantly it reproduces contemporary capitalism's obsession with the «now», the immediate, producing vast amounts of material only to render it obsolete the very next moment in a continuous stream of information. Also, the very site of open exchange is also a site of surveillance, tracking and profiling. Our lives are documented like never before and turned against us in the case of any dissidence.

The archive has, for the longest time, been central to how power is both productive and repressive of life itself. An archive that's only written through and by power is a closed, static, even dead archive. For the last thirty years or more artists (and writers before them) have been engaged in reactivating and questioning the archive. Ultimately these gestures are not enough to create a living archive (perhaps they lay the foundations). The vitality that turns the archive into something living is fundamentally connected to a moment of political becoming, when the individual, through a subjective gesture or act, becomes part of a common moment. Here the very act of producing and sharing subjective, horizontal archives is precisely about the insistence on and the fight for a living common archive, from the ground up. These subjective archives, as an expression of the new archival multitude and as part of common archives, have a liberating potential; they're full of a creative vitality.

SFP The future was one of the great obsessions of the Modern Project. The situation seems to have changed as most of contemporary art is focused on reviewing the past and claims to produce a change in its present. Regarding the future, what might be the function of art?

BA-RA As we discussed earlier in this interview, there's a significance in imagining other ways of being, living and relating to the world. That's the significance of opening up the possibility to even think of other forms of existence that really surpass, detonate and destroy the capitalist/colonial present which we're made to believe is the only possible way of being; it's been naturalised as the only possible way of being, so it's also about denaturalising these things.

SFP I'd like to end with a personal question where desire and future come together. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

BA An artist, but I also recall answering that question at some point in my childhood with: «I want to be a thief when I grow up».

RA An artist

It's been ten years since anyone last heard from Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme. They made their final appearance with a new work in 2025 and were seen at the opening but have never been seen at a public event since then. Their work continues to be exhibited in various places although not a word has been said about their appearance at any of the exhibition openings. While it seems that they've stopped producing new works, it's been said that they're operating anonymously between Harlem, New York and Jerusalem, Palestine and sometimes in other places.

Solo exhibitions include *The Incidental Insurgents*, Temporary Gallery (Cologne, 2014), *The Zone*, New Art Exchange (Nottingham, 2011) and *Collapse*, Delfina Foundation (London, 2009). Recent group exhibitions include the 31st São Paulo Biennial, 10th Gwangju Biennale, *Insert* (New Delhi), curated by Rags Media Collective (all 2014); Asian Art Biennial (Taiwan); 13th Istanbul Biennial; *Poirts of Departure*, ICA (London, all 2013); the 6th Jerusalem Show; *(On) Accordance*, Grand Union/or-bits.com, (Birmingham, both 2012); Video Re:View Festival (Katowice, 2011); *Future Movements* – Jerusalem at the Liverpool Biennial, Freies Museum (Berlin), The 23rd Instants Video Festival in Marseilles and Oran, Bluecoat Arts Centre (Liverpool), Ny Lyd Images Festival (Copenhagen), *HomeWorks 5*, Ashkal Alwan (Beirut, all 2010); Delfina Foundation (London), and *Palestine c/o Venice* at the 53rd Venice Biennale (both 2009).

# Iván Argote & Pauline Bastard

## To Send Messages to the Future

SFP In another interview we spoke about the idea of the monument in your work, and about the fact that you would like to invent a new concept for it. How do you imagine this monument of the future? Other than this desire, do you have any other projects in mind that might touch upon a certain idea of utopia?

IA I think that in the interview I said – more or less, briefly – that it could be interesting to think about the idea of the monument as something that might develop in time rather than as a permanent, large, and fat form in the centre of a given place. I remember that I thought (I'm not sure if I said it) that a gesture would make an interesting monument. A gesture to be developed among the inhabitants of a place, in time: a sign, a saying, or something like that. That would be a monument I would like to collaborate in.

If I have made work about monuments it's because I find them to be problematic, insofar as they authoritatively indicate a group of «values» that deserve to be put into question. Not all monuments work in the same way, obviously. But it is true that there are state policies that use monuments to impose and normalise a particular vision of history. Now, it's not that I have a destructive spirit, but I do believe that negotiation must... Insofar as this sort of thing is imposed on us (not just the monuments), we, as citizens, have the right (political, poetic, and beyond) to negotiate, to literally touch, move, and soften those heavy forms.

A project that touches upon a certain utopian condition... Mmmh, no. To be honest, I find utopias a little boring. I mean, to think about an ideal world seems like a waste of time to me. I'm more concrete. I think it's possible to act from the personal or the collective. But I also strongly believe in things that inspire you. I firmly believe that great ideas are better built from the bottom up, through practice, and through action

towards an idea or ideal. The opposite way seems a bit arrogant to me. I have long-term projects that I'm not sure I can reasonably carry out, but which are real for me. For example, in approximately 15 years' time (when I'll be 45), I would like to work for the public administration in Bogotá for a while, in the department of culture. I would like to work on projects for the city where culture (and by culture I mean «poetry») would be a driving force for critique, justice, tolerance, and coexistence... I still have time to think about these things. In the meantime, from my position as an artist I want to continue learning, getting to know, and experimenting with, forms and contexts. I come from a family of politicians who started out as revolutionaries followed by militancy in trade unions, and who now hold institutional posts in the city of Bogotá. I know the unions through these bonds. I know the different communities and areas of the city, not only because I've lived in five different neighbourhoods (geographically and economically speaking), but also because my father is one of the people in Colombia who knows the city of Bogotá best, in all its aspects (and I'm not exaggerating). He has been in the Parliament of Bogotá for over 10 years. My mother has also worked in, and been the director of, large public schools in different areas of the city. This background is a part of me; it's a parallel perspective from which my work could perhaps be read. And well, I know that as a part of it (of that background and from my perspective) I would be interested in participating in the political life of a place. I'm thinking of Bogotá because that's where I was born, where I grew up, it's the place I know best. Also because I believe in the political perspectives that are coming up in Latin America and, well, it would be great to collaborate somehow.

SFP We tend to see monuments as a thing of the past. The very notion of the monument is heavy, both in a literal sense

and in a symbolic one. Yet monuments look to the future, as compressed archives of what those in power decide should be remembered. *Munich Time Capsule* is a project that, without quite being utopian or wanting to become a monument, holds a certainty that could also be seen as a fantasy: that in 100 years' time art will work similarly to how it functions now. Have you fantasised with the idea of how the situation of art will be when the capsule will be opened in 2113, or with the possibility of something happening that might prevent the project from being fulfilled?

IA Well, the idea for it came up thanks to an invitation from Elmgreen & Dragset, who organised a sort of public space group show called *A Space Called Public*. The city asked them to make a public sculpture and they decided to invite 10 artists to propose projects for public space. At first, I found the idea of public sculpture problematic, as it is very particular and has a paradoxical recent history (I'm thinking of gentrification projects that have also relied on art). Munich was also problematic due to its heavy past, and, furthermore, it is known today for being the city with the highest living standards in the world... What to do in such a context? I had no interest in making a gesture that might be read as a moral lesson. I didn't want to celebrate or to criticise. And there is no way I wanted to decorate.

Anyway, whilst walking in a park in Munich, then at a work meeting, I saw a half crazy man trying to chisel a stone with another stone, somehow aimlessly and a little violently. I went up to him and tried to talk to him in my primitive German. He started talking to me while he continued to hit the stones obsessively. I didn't understand a word, he probably didn't either, and somehow that distance made me think of a time capsule. Weird. Perhaps it was the wish to communicate

with a distant, unreachable listener. I then realised that the idea hadn't come out of nowhere. Pauline Bastard (my love) had bought a cave in the mountains a few months before (yes, it's possible to buy a cave) where she left around 100 small sculptures she had previously exhibited in a museum of that region (the cave can be visited at any time). I continued walking, and the idea of opening a time capsule moved me... My father participated in the opening of a time capsule owned by the Bogotá Council 100 years ago. The city councillors had left some texts and images of the period inside a safe, and my father, who was a city councillor, not only read some of them, but had the opportunity of sending texts and images to the future. I thought that giving all citizens the possibility to take part in a time capsule turned «public sculpture» into something more public.

I thought it would be more interesting and romantic to work on the project with Pauline, who at the time was thinking about art conservation. And that's how we began: we went to live in Munich, to campaign in the street, in parks, in squares. Pauline had the idea of placing the messages inside a gigantic stone. So we had a very realistic stone built out of resin and we would walk around with it in this orderly city, asking people to participate. It was a very difficult task, but it was very much «what we were here for». To pose questions in the street: What do you think about now? What about the future? What would you say to this city in 100 years' time? Would you say anything? Would you send anything? Little by little, the messages began to arrive, even from other artists who were taking part in the project (Ed Ruscha sent us an envelope full of stuff). And it went on for three weeks. We received almost one thousand messages, which didn't seem like a lot at first, but which is finally pretty good. We closed the capsule; we had to reduce its size due to installing issues. The whole process included negotiating with the city hall to decide where the stone would

remain for 100 years. We got the stone to stay in front of Munich's Ministry of Culture, in a garden, with a plaque with the necessary instructions. I don't know what Munich will be like in 100 years. 100 years is a lot and it's not much. Munich saw Nazism appear and disappear within 10 years, it was bombed (though not completely) and reconstructed, it saw the Degenerate Art Exhibition, and, today, many other art exhibitions. I think artistic «value» doesn't interest us in this project. We will try to keep the idea of opening it alive (soon it will be its first birthday). I fantasise that we will still be alive then, hee hee... And I envisage an exhibition with what was sent. The art being made then will surely be very interesting... Let's hope they don't bomb Munich again.

SFP Some of our personal objects also function as time capsules, or identity capsules. Particularly if others who don't know us discover them in the future. We could also think about artworks as time capsules and their reception as exercises in archaeology. In the case of *Munich Time Capsule*, both ideas are consciously brought together. Do you think that knowing that its contents will be made public in the next century has modified the collective message enclosed within it? That the format of the time capsule is deceiving because it doesn't reflect who we are, but how we would like to be seen in the future?

IA Totally. Perhaps the format of the time capsule emphasises this «how one wishes to be seen». But I think it can also be an exercise in honesty about an era. That is to say, even if we want to appear as someone else, it's hard to disguise our hominid pettiness. When people realised that we will most probably all be dead in 100 years, it gave rise to a slight awareness of the end. Some took it modestly, for others it was anguishing...

Many said: «But I'll be dead, and my children, who are small now, might be dead...» And yes, for sure... That distance of 100 years forces us to imagine an other that is very far away. For me, the time capsule is more of a project of the present. Its importance lies in the relationship it may generate with the present, under the dreamy blanket of its opening.

SFP Form is more important than content in a time capsule- «the medium is the message» to use McLuhan's magic formula. The fact that there is something travelling hermetically through one hundred years of future history, isolated from other events, freezing information, is more important than the information itself. Aren't you concerned that the information might «not live up to» expectations? Now let's imagine that you are that being of the future for this capsule. If you were to open a time capsule from 100 years ago, what would you like to find inside it?

IA I think that even the smallest bit of information is valuable (texts, images, materials, etc.), and I don't think that it's possible to judge. I also don't think that the capsule is more important than what it contains. I feel that it is one singular body: the two exist together and cover one another. I really respect those who participated, and feel that the participants are the ones who, through their whispers in time, poeticize the project.

If I were to open a capsule from a hundred years ago, I would like to find hair in it.

SFP What I meant was that the idea of a time capsule is already so powerful in and of itself, that sometimes what it contains is not so important, because it encloses a message from a specific present towards an abstract future. As a receiver, why would you like to find hair? Come to think of it, as an artist you

are somehow already continuously sending messages into the future. But apart from artworks, what would you send in a time capsule?

IA I think the beauty of the capsule is the secret it encloses, and the projections it gives rise to. When the project began I dreamed of the idea that the capsule would spread in the city to the extent that it might turn into a local policy, that is to say, that it would be a tool to think about the city. I think that our economic and bureaucratic resources, which were generous, were obviously not enough to make the project a constituent matter. But I think that it's my first project in that direction, a first step towards something I would like to continue exploring... Perhaps it is a project to propose when I'm 45.

I sent a number of things. I sent texts about the capsule itself, about the process, and also about some personal matters. I sent some objects, some images, and also a lock of hair... Why the hair? I don't know, perhaps because it's an extension of the body that is easily amputated. And because it keeps well.

SFP Despite the fact that utopia is not one of your interests, the idea of the city – which is one of them – was once associated with the notion of the future and the desire for social change. Groys comments that this city, where a desire for utopian transformation was projected, has gradually turned into a conservative space that looks to the past, to its history and its origins. The figure of the tourist here is a fundamental one as the ultimate receiver of a city that is not as interested in its citizens as in temporary travellers. The artist, due to his nomadic condition, is comparable to the tourist. Despite the fact he interferes with cities in a different way by leaving behind new monuments, there is also the risk of addressing someone who is disconnected from the city's daily life: the art tourist. As a time

capsule, *Munich Time Capsule* could have been made in any other city, yet it allows the artist to break out of his condition as a tourist who goes through cities without touching them. Does this situation, which connects the artist with the tourist, the artwork with the souvenir, worry you? How does it feel to have to address a city that is not the one you live in or know well?

IA It's very strange. I feel very disconnected from Munich. It's very different from my original habitat, with a complex history. As I was saying earlier, it was difficult at first. But I don't think you need to live in a place and know it perfectly in order to do something there.

I don't know how *Time Capsule* could be turned into a souvenir in this case, even if it was made in other cities... More than a souvenir, it could turn into some sort of street furniture, which I would find interesting. Munich is a very touristy city, with luxury tourism and medical tourism. We did interact with tourists during the process, and many of them sent stuff, which I found interesting insofar as, as you say, tourists are a part of life in the city, especially, and increasingly, in Europe.

Personally, I don't feel that the tourist and the artist are all that close. I mean, you can be both at the same time and not... One can try to connect everything with everything else, and, obviously, find similarities (the artist-cook, artist-priest, artist-shaman, artist-athlete, artist-gardener, artist-vagabond, artist-scientist, etc.). It's hard to generalise. Which artist are we talking about? Which tourist are we talking about? Not that I deny that there is any connection between them, but I don't think I can shed light on this subject despite having made work about tourism and having placed myself in ambiguous situations. I think tourism is very complex. In the case of this project, *Munich Time Capsule* was an interaction tool that allowed us to come a little closer to the city. These projects

are a privilege in terms of life experience. To travel and stay in a place for months, working with the locals and with others abroad opens up your perspective. It's more of a research trip and, in our case, a performative one. To roll down the street with that big stone, with a Greenpeace sort of campaign... but in order to remember the past\* we would have to speak about the present, the past, and the future.

SFP To «make memory»\* is a very suggestive expression, as it highlights the process of construction that accompanies the act of remembering, especially when that memory is addressed to a somewhat abstract collective. A memory that delves into the past is also a project for the future. Beyond the official memory dominating history, what part of our present would you like people to remember in the future?

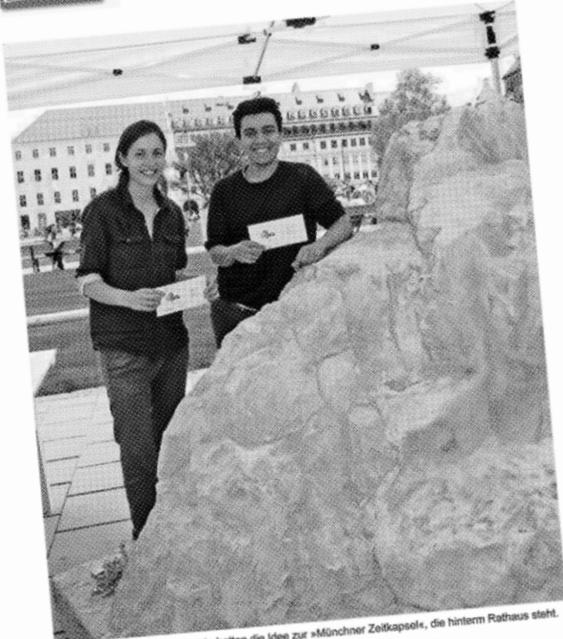
IA Certain feelings, some desires... History, though complex in its construction, is based on fact. Well, maybe it would be good to remember things that never happened. Perhaps the *Time Capsule* talks a bit about that. They are personal testimonies, ideas perhaps, memories, hopes...

SFP To conclude, I would like to try out a personal exercise in the archaeology of the future. When you were small, what did you want to be when you grew up?

IA My mother says that I was once asked this question as a small child and I replied «boyfriend»... I don't recall that, but it's one of those family stories that always come up in family reunions and meals. When I was 4 or 5 I wanted to be Carlos Gardel and/or Batman; between the age of 6 and 8, an astronaut, an architect briefly (I was mad about Lego for a while), and, from 11 on, I wanted to make cartoons... Well, the list goes on...

**Münchner  
Wochen  
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Wir zeigen Ihnen, was in München los ist!



Pauline Bastard und Iván Argote hatten die Idee zur »Münchner Zeitkapsel«, die hinterm Rathaus steht. Jeder kann mitmachen, die Umschläge gibt es in der Rathausgalerie. Foto: scy



**Weiterlesen:**

- Zum Artikel: [München in 100 Jahren](#)
- [München](#) (weitere Infos und Artikel)
- [Münchner Wochenanzeiger](#) (weitere Artikel)

## Lúa Coderch

SFP The notion of project is very common within the contemporary world, and within art. At the same time as it is linked to the intention of doing something, it also refers to a certain organised disposition needed to create «that something». Are there any projects that you haven't been able to carry out yet, or a project that you see as utopian, and, therefore, impossible to carry out?

LC In relation to the intention of doing something and then doing it, and, furthermore, with an organised disposition, you got me thinking that – at least for me – it's customary to try to put off the moment of formalisation: to wish for that moment to be postponed. And I think this is what it means to be busy – through an everyday, intimate experience – with what is most utopian and unrealisable. For example, I started smoking very late in life, at an age when people are already quitting. And I think that it happened precisely because of this feeling of perpetual deferral, added to a physical awareness of my longevity, feeling that I had a long time ahead of me. You know, «I would like one of those 'Smoking kills', please». For me, it has something to do with picking up a habit whose only objective seems to be to consume time and to consume yourself, but which, as a collateral effect, situates you in relation to the intention of doing something. I think that this has something to do with what a project is made of, in organic and physiological terms. But to answer your question, I'm sure that I don't think up projects that I think are unrealisable. I tend to think about things that seem possible and that I want to do. A different matter would be for me to realise, in the process, that it wasn't reasonable or that it was impossible. But by then it is already happening. I think that it's a sort of blind spot in the organised disposition that you were talking about. The project is, above all, the promise of a repercussion that might materialise before others. But as you

## Desire, its Journey, and the Object

say, it would be more honest to take it only as an intention, even better, as a trigger, and not as some sort of creative contract.

SFP The promise of repercussion based on the conquest of an objective target is something we see in collective public art projects. Through them, a particular failure can become the failure of a whole era. Are failed projects – those that don't manage to consolidate their projections – the ones that maintain a certain «time capsule» factor?

LC The time capsule is the artefact, the physical body of the project, the medium. Time capsules are vehicles. That is why all the thinking revolving around time capsules is related to the form that carries something into the future. What is transmitted, however, always seems to be fairly arbitrary; they are often things without much substance, trash even, in the best sense of the word. A project, on the other hand, even more so if it is a failed one, is a universe, and depends on artefacts to exist and circulate amongst us. For example, half way between *Red Star* and *Pentagram* – a story I told in two chapters – is the journey of a world, of a project, as if it were a ghost travelling from one body to another. The monumental red star that was dismantled in 1990 moved from the highest point of the Bulgarian Communist Party House to become the embodiment of a historical moment of transition from one regime to another. It was turned into an image: an enormous red star called Pentagram, moving away in the sky, attached to a helicopter. But due to the fact that the object itself – the monumental star – disappeared, *Pentagram's* mnemonic charge ended up taking over another star: a more modest, nameless one, that had been abandoned for years in a courtyard in Sofia. Once time passed and nostalgia appeared, people «discovered» this other star and began to take little pieces as a souvenir. This star became a vehicle

(a medium, in the psychic sense) for the nostalgia that *Pentagram* had embodied at the time. I think it was Boym who said that nostalgia is a sickness of movement, of transit. And in that transitory sense, the material remains of failed projects are very powerful as mediums or vehicles. The photograph that opens *Red Star* was also given to me by a member of my family when I was a teenager who sported Che Guevara T-shirts and all that paraphernalia. The photograph circulated enthusiastically from one owner to the next. There was my uncle's enthusiasm when he gave me the picture, as a testimony of something extraordinary, then my own, receiving the document as a sign of something long gone, although I only took interest in its particular story years later.

Explaining this reminded me of that sinister Werther's Original ad. The one about the grandfather who talks about the first time his own grandfather gave him a sweet, and thus perpetuates the tradition by giving one to his own grandson. Perhaps Werther's Original is the material trace of a failed project.

SFP We tend to think about nostalgia in relation to the past. Jameson, on the contrary, says that utopia comes from a nostalgia of the present. The absence of the past and of the future would be joined by a certain absence of the present. It makes me think that desire, which is very much connected to utopia, is also connected to absence. In this project, which doesn't exist yet, covered by this absence of the present, you work with three stories that are connected by an intense desire through the images that condense them – both the desire they carry and the desire they still generate. How does desire function in an isolated image?

lc     Trying not to think about the intimidating amount of things that must have been said and written on the subject, I think that desire always refers to an isolated image. Or a mise en abyme of its lack, or absence, as you say. I showed you three isolated images, three documents. One of them is the photograph I have already described, a big five-pointed star (a red one, though the photograph is in black and white) moving away on a helicopter; the second is also a photograph, from 1969, where you can see a maquette of the World Trade Centre when the building was still being constructed; and finally, an undeveloped film roll of photographs taken during a Russian space mission in 1985. If, to the desire you were talking about, you add nostalgia (which could be seen as desire applied to the field of memory or of history), I think the stories condensed in those three documents can be desired as a sort of collective after-effect. That is to say, with the feeling of not having yet had enough time to desire them. Now they are already in the past without having been completely fulfilled or, at least, not the way we thought they would be. Could that be the case?

It makes me think that desiring those stories now, through the obsessions of our time, turns them into zombies. Out of the three documents I showed you when we started talking about *The Future*, which do you desire most?

SFP     Thinking back on my late teens, your list of historical zombies – capitalism, communism, and the Space Race – reminds me of other cultural zombies. While, in terms of music, most of my friends proudly looked down on the present, praising with affectation and nostalgia the music of the past and its psychedelic bohemians, I began to get into electronic music, thinking how lucky I was to be able to see Aphex Twin live. This desire for belonging to the «now» made me take interest in you, the artists of my generation, and think of the past as a

place to turn to once in a while, when the present calls for it. It sounds bad to say this, because in the cultural field, which claims to be left winged, it is frowned upon to choose capitalism over communism, but when I saw the image of the Twin Towers I was fascinated. Afterwards I turned it around and it contained a text charged with the desire for national and world self-improvement through architecture. And for a moment I missed being able to feel that development and progress, which we look down upon, are valid. To move forward without the responsibility of having to look back. I suppose that one feels something similar with the Space Race, where there is no public failure and there is still plenty of terra ignota to discover. In fact, I am surprised by the colonialist attitude towards all things to do with the universe, as if we hadn't managed to learn from imperialism. Which of the three stories do you desire most?

lc     Yes, I see what you mean. I wouldn't swap eras either. I would swap places perhaps, because I have never been all that interested in the Space Race (maybe precisely because of what you're saying, that it's a field where there are no collective failures, which may be symptomatic of its actual significance, right?). But as a document, the one I desire most is the film roll. Maybe because at the moment it is the one that presents the biggest dilemma, and is therefore on my mind. I will now explain why. First of all, the object. It's an aluminium capsule with inscriptions providing information on its production: the ship it travelled on, the program it was included in, the camera with which the photos were taken, the type of film roll... Secondly, it supposedly contains an undeveloped roll of pictures of the Earth taken from outer space. To see the Earth from outer space. I think that even if we have seen lots of pictures like that, it's still quite something. So is the fact that the

film roll is a potential (the possibility of developing it or not, the images it may contain, whether there really is anything in there, and, finally, if there are photographs, will they be better than our own expectations? And, in any case, the idea of developing images that were taken so many years ago by people we don't know, even if we may know who they are, and even if those photos might be the least subjective thing possible...).

But I think that what I like the most is that this document and the story trigger a series of subjective and emotional reactions in everyone I've spoken to about them, reactions that I share: incredulity, curiosity, suspicion, etc. I'm surprised that everyone generally thinks that it is more valuable to keep the roll undeveloped for fear of losing the story. That is more or less what I thought when I found it. I bought the film roll on ebay. It cost 114€. I'm mentioning it because this question usually comes up. And I thought, «well, perhaps it's a scam» but, even then, I would still be buying a story. The other question that always comes up is «what are you going to do?» But to be honest, I don't know. At the moment, I'm postponing the problem.

SFP If you were to ask me what the object – and not the story – I most desire is, I would say the film roll. Undeveloped, to join the general opinion of those you have presented the dilemma to. I think that in our refusal to develop it lies a fear of failure, especially when linked to the Space Race, where we imagine interesting things must take place, rather than the very boring life that astronauts in a space station probably have. Cinema has contributed to this. An undeveloped film roll is a time capsule; it is the promise of content, of a story, of a desire. Most of the objects we buy involve the purchase of a desire. Which object, out of the ones you have, or had, is most strongly linked to a personal desire?

LC



SFP I would be lying if I were to say that, upon seeing this image, I didn't feel the desire to ask you how the two objects are related, and about your personal history of desire. Added to this unknown desire (yours) is another one (mine): the wish to know that there is something beyond what these object can express. Yet I prefer to hold back. To express a desire that, really, doesn't want to be fulfilled in order to continue existing. This situation makes me wonder what is happening to that film roll if some of us prefer to keep it undeveloped. Is the fulfilment of a wish its very demise? Maybe this idea simply backs up our cowardice. Like when we don't move to another city thinking we will stop liking it if we do. Or like when we don't want utopias to develop for fear of them being similar to certain science-fiction predictions...

LC Fulfilled desires belong, certainly, to another dimension. I don't know that they die, but I suppose that in a way they become invisible, like water to fish. They might come up again, but to do so they have to appear to be a little different.

It makes me think that we relate to the future through its interface, a contact surface that is made up of all the things of the future: all the sensations, emotions, or interactions

between the future and ourselves. The future in itself is inaccessible, and yet we have its flavour, its tactility, etc. Right now the future seems to be more sensitive and emotional than a mere projection. I would also say that futurist things no longer refer to the future, but to the past, through nostalgia. Because they are the forms we recognise, in terms of culture, when we think about the future.

SFP That nostalgia you speak of in relation to the future makes me think of electronic music, of the sounds that were seen as experimental years ago, and which still carry the promise of something that never happened. We could think of music as a temporal interface we use to travel through various times at once, or to remain in the present continuous a little longer than usual before being thrown into the evidence of the past, and the contingency of the future. Do you think it is possible to interact with the future through music, or that this idea is just a comfortable position, a cliché that – because it is shared by many – makes us feel less alone in our lack of understanding of time? It still surprises me to see how feeling certain things doesn't necessarily imply understanding them.

LC Yes, I think it is possible. But you know much more about this than I do! You say we would need several parallel timelines to take each and every one of our passions to the limit. And by that you mean finding another relationship to music, for example. I agree with that. But there is another part of your argument I would really bet on: the part where you mention the possibility of feeling less alone. And I'm not mentioning it because of companionship, though there is that too, but because I can't imagine a future without other people. For me, the idea of the future has always been embodied by a person, with the wish to be «more like» or «to spend more time

with» someone. This also works the other way around, right? I think it was Woody Allen who told a child not to listen to his teachers, that he should simply observe them, as individuals, and that through this he should reach his own conclusions regarding whether he should follow their advice or not. The tally of complicity, passion, or loathing of concrete individuals or groups of people is like an archaeology of the parallel timelines we need, or we have thought we need, throughout our lives. Can you think of anyone you would like to meet? I'm just asking, you don't have to reply!

SFP I suddenly understand that it is very difficult to think in terms of the future because we cannot know who will be with us then. Like when we travel to a city that we have little information on, so we are incapable of imagining what we will do or what sort of people we will find there. Our lack of expectations allows for situations to acquire a certain extraordinary condition. The presence of others in the future, of our accomplices, is a factor I hadn't taken into account up until now and I thank you for it. The disappointment associated with expectations makes me not want to meet anyone in particular since I left behind an adolescence that has never quite disappeared. I like to meet strangers because they show me that there is a whole other reality outside our own imagination that we only access through the experience of the encounter. An expectation that is yet to be fulfilled seems like a good place from which to pitch the last question, by returning to childhood and its abundant doses of desire. Lúa, as a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

LC ...I don't remember.

I think that in the future I could take advantage of the things I have learned to become a professional criminal. Not long ago, I discovered that I have what in criminology is called a forensic conscience, which is the capacity to work on a scene so that others will read it in a way that doesn't incriminate you. An alternative: I remembered the old aunt of the narrator of *In Search of Lost Time*. The woman is very old and sick; she is bedridden because she is very weak. But between one bowl of soup and the next she dreams up the idea of the house on fire, of a great misfortune that will finally make her leave her room, which she knows would be very good for her, but that she will not do unless, as in a dream, there be a Force Majeure. She imagines the astonishment on others' faces upon seeing her leave the house on fire on her own, with an energy that only she knows she still has. I really like this apocalyptic thing, as a horizon of the future that brings out the best in you. In my case, I think I would like the future of a Robinson or of a MacGyver, a life where an idea or a skill can mark the difference between life and death.

# Boris Groys

SFP Some utopian projects are based on the idea that they might be realised eventually while others belong to the purely speculative field of science fiction. In your opinion, what is, if any, the most interesting utopian project of our time? Do you have any unrealised project you could call utopian?

BG Every utopian project has to do with planning and control. It presupposes our ability to predict and shape the future. But I tend to see the future as unpredictable and uncontrollable – as a place where our plans and utopias collapse.

SFP In *Immortal Bodies* you talk about The Biocosmist-Immortalists who, in 1922, claimed the right to a permanent existence for humans through immortality, resurrection and rejuvenation. In addition they demanded the freedom to move in cosmic space as opposed to the human rights of the French Revolution. And there was also the Institute for Blood Transfusion, founded and directed by Aleksandr Bogdanov who believed that the blood of the young could rejuvenate the older. What made it possible for these projects to emerge at that time? How were they received by society and the political establishment?

BG That was a time when the hope to be able to control the future was strong. Additionally, the socialist state opened up the possibility of mobilising the whole of society to achieve a unique, common goal. The question was only: what kind of goal should it be? Immortality for everyone was a very seductive goal – but, of course, only from a distant perspective.

SFP You have claimed, on several occasions, that one of the singularities of art is its projection into the future. According to this, it seems that art is making a promise: the promise of a certain eternity. In a way, this idea would also be claiming

## The Contingency of the Unpredictable

the autonomy of art work, since it needs to be able to speak for itself in the future. Art work that travels through time; is it able to transport its life history? Where does the memory of art work lie?

**BG** It's a difficult question indeed. Art work has the chance to outlive the time of its creation. In this sense it also outlives the meaning that's ascribed to it by the historical milieu in which the art work originated. The future will ascribe many different, heterogeneous meanings to this work. It seems to me that art work is historically successful if it's able to sustain all these meanings.

**SFP** If we think of an archive as a device that configures contemporary art for times to come, what is the responsibility of art criticism in relation to the future?

**BG** I don't believe the role of art criticism is really important in this respect. The formation of an art archive is also the result of many factors: economical, political, even military. And pure chance also plays an important role here. But art criticism can play an important role in interpreting the art archive – and, accordingly, in how it's situated within culture as a whole.

**SFP** One of the characteristics of our time is the excessive use of the prefix «post». Apart from dragging concepts over time, it also demonstrates an inability to overcome these concepts and perhaps a lack of courage to create new ones. Is it possible to get out of Postmodernism, or will it last forever?

**BG** I think Postmodernism was over long ago – if it ever existed. But the use of «post» is still there, it's true. «Post» has an

important function: it refers to experiences that are common for the whole of society, that unite people. So one speaks about the time after 9/11, or after the Cold War, or after the emergence of the internet. That gives one the possibility to appeal to a certain common experience, to find a common ground.

**SFP** The future is something yet to come. We live in the present which we call contemporary, or at least we think we do. According to this, isn't the future the greatest utopia, something that cannot happen because we can only experience the here and now? Are we prisoners of the present?

**BG** Well, we're not. Although we live in the present, we know this present will go away at a certain point in time – that everything flows, everything changes. This knowledge creates a distance between us and our contemporaneity. That's why we're able to look at the present from the outside – and create contemporary art.

**SFP** The Modern Project was a future-oriented project with a strong inclination to reject the past and tradition. We could say now that modernity has become a certain tradition for contemporary art. I'm thinking about all the artists, art works and theories devoted to reviewing, analysing and criticising modernity. Is the past the main artistic project of the future? Is the failure of the Modern Project to achieve its goals the reason why the future has been discredited to some extent, also in art?

**BG** Well, I would say that, today, we have more respect for the future. We don't believe it's so easy to control and design. So we still relate to the future – but in a more open and cautious way.

SFP You've claimed that being contemporary means being «with time» rather than «in time». What is the function of art within the notion of contemporaneity?

BG We live in the contemporaneity – but, actually, we don't realise it. Our contemporaneity is globalised but, normally, we can only see a small part of it. The globalised art scene gives the artist a chance to overcome this provincial perspective and look at the contemporary world in its totality.

SFP Simon Critchley says «We have to resist the notion and ideology of the future, which is always the ultimate trump card of capitalist narratives of progress». The future is perceived as a contingent time that we cannot bring under control, although the capitalist regime seems to rely on it, as much as to jeopardise the present. Have we lost the future under the capitalist ideology?

BG Well, yes, I agree that the future is unpredictable. It's something that's overlooked by capitalist planning – but it was also overlooked by socialist planning and modernist and avant-garde utopias.

SFP There are numerous artistic practices that attempt, more or less successfully, to leave it up to the viewer to articulate the possible meaning of the narrative contained in the piece. Sometimes passivity arises when we feel it's not worth the effort, that we'll not get anywhere. Here passivity is related to frustration and frustration, I would say, has nothing to do with indifference. Is the commonly-held opinion about the passivity of the contemporary viewer actually true?

BG Every viewer is passive by definition. But every interesting work of art has the potential to encourage the viewer to abandon this passive position and to become an artist. Or to make a revolution. Or to change his or her life.

SFP Beuys's phrase «Everyone is an artist» is as famous as it is premonitory of the current situation. Today the means of art are available to many of us, but does this mean we can all be artists?

BG Well, Beuys meant that every kind of economic activity can be understood as artistic practice. For him «The expanded notion of economy coincides with the expanded notion of art». But I would say that art is the chance to act against economy, against rationality, against oneself and one's own interests. But, of course, even if this chance is open to everyone, not everybody uses it.

SFP One of the great debates of contemporary and modern art, the relation between art and politics, has a major role in your work. Historically art has been related to the sphere of representation and therefore it has been conceived as the antagonist of what we call reality. Is art becoming a compensatory space where artists have taken on the responsibility to do what should be done in other areas of the public sphere?

BG We're living in a world in which majorities are relevant in economy and politics. That's the essence of democracy. But art opens up a stage on which political, social and moral attitudes can be formulated that can't necessarily appeal to the majority and win the support of the majority. Politics and art operate in the same public space but art is free from many restrictions under which politics has to operate. A politician

has to win the support of the masses. The artist is sovereign – even if the area of his or her sovereignty is restricted.

SFP I'd like to finish with a somewhat personal question. It has to do with imagination and its close relationship with the modes of production of each time. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

BG Maybe you'll be surprised but, as a child, I wanted to do precisely what I do now: write texts on art and culture.

Boris Groys was born in 1947 in East Berlin. He went to high school in Leningrad, where he also studied philosophy, mathematics and logic at the University of Leningrad. After a stint as a teaching assistant, he moved and started teaching Linguistics at the University of Moscow. He left the Soviet Union in 1981 for the Federal Republic of Germany. Between 1988 and 1994, Groys was Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Philosophical Institute of the University of Münster, in Germany, where he also obtained a Ph. D. in Philosophy in 1992. Between 1994 and 2009 he taught Aesthetics, Art History, and Media Theory at the HFG and the ZKM in Karlsruhe. From 2005 to 2009, Groys was Global Distinguished Professor at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at New York University, where he is now a full Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies. Since 2009, he is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Academy of Design in Karlsruhe, Germany. As a philosopher, essayist, art critic, curator, and author of numerous books, Groys' work maintains a constant dialogue with thinkers from the 20th Century such as Derrida, Baudrillard, Deleuze, and Benjamin.

# Raimundas Malašauskas

SFP I predict this interview will be considerably different from the other ones. However, I would like to begin in a similar way. Are there any projects you would like to carry out but you consider to be somehow utopian?

RM I wonder what makes you predict that this interview will be considerably different from the other ones. But I guess we don't have time to answer that anymore – so you were right?

The other day Heidi Ballet asked me what I would like to be in terms of time measurement units, «I would like to be an hour» she said. «I would like to be an extension» was my first reaction.

At the moment I'm playing with a fantasy of curating a biennale on a big cruise ship. But I guess fantasy is not utopia, and a cruise ship isn't either. But since I've never been on a cruise ship it feels like some kind of utopia.

SFP I would like to pick up a question you asked us some time ago and direct it back to you. Have you written your obituary? Could you tell me what it said?

RM It said «It's not the first time; it's not the last one».

SFP Why are you chrono-dyslexic? How did you find out about it?

RM «Chrono-dyslexic» was a term that, at some point, I found interesting to use in describing uneven temporalities, jumps, leaps and transversal atmospheres. But I don't think it's such a good term, even if I may be experiencing the aforementioned symptoms – it takes speech as its model and thus reduces time to language experience. I'm sure those who experience speech dyslexia would agree with this criticism.

SFP If we could be tourists in time, in what time – past or future – would you like to spend a weekend? In which would you like to spend a year?

RM Spending a year in a weekend or a weekend in a year would be a good enough accomplishment.

SFP On one occasion you said that «there's not enough time to experience future anymore». Nevertheless I feel that, in today's «project culture», we're permanently living in the future. We live waiting for the time when our projects will come to fruition. We also live thinking that the next bar will be better than the one we're in right now. Has the immediate future turned into a journey of anxiety?

RM Future is a journey, and not only ours (I mean humans.) I like how Reza Negarestani speaks about it, saying that future constantly revises and modifies its origin thus changing itself radically. To be honest, I'm not so bothered by the lack of future these days. It's happening in all possible ways: planned, unplanned, known and unknown.

SFP Technology has been an important ally of imagined futures. With the current technological invasion of our everyday life sometimes I think we have turned it into an obstacle to experiencing time. We no longer wait for anyone, looking at the street, because all our focus goes to the screen of our smartphones. Also because we're scared of «dead time» (or empty time) since it tends to generate boredom. Nevertheless, boredom is an exceptional way of experiencing time. It brings to mind a possible utopia whose title already exists (or whose title we already know): «In Search of Lost Time». Why, if we truly want to experience time, do we constantly avoid it?

RM I actually think that people are experiencing a much broader range of time than just instantaneity. Perhaps the technological world you're talking about runs mostly in the Western World. But I remember, when I was in Cuba a few years ago, I suddenly felt totally different ways of passing time; for example, a very extended wait, in particular.

SFP Electronic music carries – or at least it used to carry – a request for the future. It had to be the music of the future. Now it's the music of the past, while still evoking some unfulfilled future. What song or what style of music do you use to travel to the future?

RM I should try folk music.

SFP Deleuze said that when a woman – I guess a man too – buys a dress, she's not really buying that dress. She's purchasing all the future situations in which she'll wear the dress. What object, which you acquired, made you project yourself most into the future?

RM My stilettos.

SFP Science fiction – also the Bible – has generated many apocalypses. Almost all are tragic and have existential claims. However, there's one which is fun and even banal. I'm thinking of Douglas Adam's *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*. How do you imagine a possible apocalypse?

RM I think an apocalypse is happening all the time; it's just unevenly distributed, to paraphrase W. Gibson.

SFP Following on from the idea of the «end of the world»: imagine that humanity has disappeared but not its objects or its culture. At some point, explorers from another galaxy land on our planet; they are intelligent alien beings. What or what object would you like them to find first? If only art works remained on Earth, which one of them would you like them to come upon?

RM Maybe the Internet? And all the Tino Sehgal *oeuvre* live.

SFP What advice would you give the future?

RM I gave future advice in the past and looked what happened! So I will restrain myself this time.

SFP I'd like go back to the past, to those school exercises in which we had to fill in the gaps. The difference is that, back then, we had to put in the «right thing» and here you can fill them in with anything you want:

*The future is...?*

*Is the future...?*

*Because of the future...*

*Why does the future...?*

*The future can...*

*Could the future...?*

SFP Thirteen seems a good number to end an interview. And I would like to end this one as I began, by asking a question that's common to all the interviews in this book. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

RM A chef on a boat.



Absorbing and absorbed by everything that surrounded him, Raimundas Malašauskas could have easily let himself slip towards the darker side of his imaginative nature. Luckily enough, he had a second nature – definitively a more pragmatic one – that he fully developed in his early twenties. It was an important experience, not worth mentioning here, that allowed him to take distance from his maybe too familiar view of the world, thus pursuing a more independent way of thinking. Through this distancing, he came to understand and subdue the oversensitive tendencies he had displayed since childhood. A new dynamic opened up for Raimundas, who found himself as the catalyst of a spiraling movement of multiple influences, interests, and talents. It was a frenzy and changeable energy that was then reshaped and channeled by a partner who proved to be very beneficial to him. This person marked his destiny. Raimundas was able to surf on this wave of support that led him to quietly discern his main talents and yield to them. The yielding came with yet a new understanding of himself, or rather a lack of it, which resolved into a rather mild mid-age crisis. His surroundings, in fact, always remained supportive and highly stimulating, so much so that he possibly just did not have enough time for a deeper crisis. In any case, it turned out to be a very much needed easing up time that was followed by an increased power of realization. His affective life flourished as he felt free to explore its more subtle strands that encompassed all aspects of his life and work. Raimundas grew richer until the end of his life, which ended where it began.

## Cristina de Middel

SFP Two of Hans Ulrich Obrist's interviews from *A Brief History of New Music* begin with a question related to utopia, and to yet unrealised things. I think it's a good way to start this interview, both because of the similarity of formats, and for the tangential connection with the notion of the future. Are there any projects that you haven't carried out? Any utopian projects that are too vast to be made?

CM Almost everything that I imagine is fairly possible to create. When you work with photography you only have to deal with the two-dimensional side that is in front of the camera. It's very easy to make something out of this two-dimensional plane. In this sense, both painting and drawing have created incredible things. With the camera you can also make incredible and totally utopian things. There are no limits when it comes to producing images. When it comes to creating utopian projects, well, you can carry out some fairly absurd ideas.

For a while now, and as a sort of homage to the absurd, I've been thinking about travelling through all the villages in Spain in alphabetical order. These tributes to the absurd are a way of stepping out of the box, which is built on intentions and results; to escape from the logic of «I do this to achieve that». That's when really fun and unexpected things happen, which lead to projects that I like. For example, in April of 2014 I was in Los Angeles for the Paris Photo festival. I was alone and I decided to rent a car with a map and little else. On the first day, while I was driving, I thought, «I'll go that way». When I looked at the map again that evening, I found a village in Arizona that was called Why. I drove for three days until I finally reached «Why», which turned out to be a village of four houses and little else. I didn't find the answer I was looking for, so I returned. Nevertheless, on the way I found a very beautiful story, which is the project I will be working on in 2015, in Mexico and the US.

## Re-writing with Images

SFP *The Afronauts* is a project that has become very famous and that somehow has a life of its own, away from you. In fact, perhaps it is boring for you to return to it time and again and your interests are directed elsewhere. If the space race and utopia are part of science fiction's genetic code, what do you think are the determining factors for the success of *The Afronauts*?

CM There have been a number of factors. On the one hand, there is its market success linked to the fact that the book appeared right at the time when photo books were at their peak, also in Spain, which was receiving some attention. I was also very lucky because it fell into the hands of Martin Parr – a sort of guru of the photo book –, who gave it a lot of exposure, and then I wasn't in Spain, I was abroad. If something becomes famous in London or in the US, it becomes famous in the rest of the world.

On the other hand, I think that the subject matter of *Afronauts* is a positive one with a touch of originality. We are used to consuming images of Africa that have nothing to do with what I was offering. We all have an idealised image – through films – and a not so idealised one – through newspapers – of Africa. We have all consumed the same cliché about Africa for years of a great unknown and dangerous continent we don't dare to travel to because people either die or kill one another there... It's also true that everyone likes science fiction and that we all have a certain connection to the cosmos. Who hasn't stopped to look at the stars at some point and thought «how small we are»? To bring two elements together that feed our curiosity and our dreams produced a well-balanced cocktail that many people liked. People who know nothing about photography – my mother, for example, who didn't understand what I had been doing so far – understood the project very well. I guess that there is also the aesthetics, a somewhat nostal-

gic one from the sixties. For many, the photographs look like *Hipstamatic*, although in my case it's a direct reference to my family photo album. I created my own visual library by putting all these elements together: the way I imagine science fiction, the way I imagine Africa, and how I imagine a photographic feature might look in the sixties.

SFP Photojournalism sees photography as documentary, something that has been called into question in the past years. Perhaps this crisis comes from the fact that, in the same way we have come to terms with photography's transformation, the notion of the document that is still in use is tightly connected with «what has happened», and to a supposed neutrality of the document. I will include here a small digression by thinking about Eva Illouz, who, in order to carry out a sociological analysis of love in the Western world, referenced well-known examples from 19th Century literature, reaffirming their condition as cultural documents through which it is possible to trace back a hegemonic understanding of love and relationships. These documents, in terms of literature, are linked to the imagination of the writer who, in turn, connects with an imaginary that cannot be separated from its era. This is where I also see a documentary dimension in *The Afronauts*. Perhaps not so much in terms of the story they tell, but in the contemporary legacy of this history through your reconstruction of a specific event that could have taken place in the 60s. Do you think a change is possible in the paradigm of the document? Through a use of the document in relation to the imagination, instead of to what we understand as reality?

CM I think it is. In fact, we are heading in that direction. Something similar is happening with the laws of physics: you cannot subject an object to pressure or force without it

being deformed or affected. We have received so many images through the same channel, always saying the same thing, that it has warped the way that we should – theoretically – consume them. When faced with the image of a malnourished child, our reaction is to help the child, or to want to save certain countries, using an image to trigger change. This, which has been taking place over the past thirty years, has now changed. That photograph no longer has the same effect. Today strategies are closer to advertising than to documentary, as you can see on the campaigns of Doctors Without Borders, which no longer show pictures of what goes on in those places.

Looking back, cinema has progressed much faster than photography. When the first film was screened, with that train entering the station, the viewers got up, afraid that the train was going to run them over. From that moment on, and up until films such as *Alien* or *2001. A Space Odyssey*, the way an audience receives an image has changed a lot. It's true that the film industry is far more powerful than that of the still image, where we have been slower. Instead of promoting image development in accordance with its narrative potential, we have wasted time deciding whether photography is art or not. For me it is precisely that grey area that exists between the artistic and the documentary that is interesting.

In photography we tend to underestimate the viewer, even more so in the newspapers. My biggest frustration when I was working for the press was the relationship between the photograph and the headline, which have to be identical. Why can't we alter this relationship between text and image? The other frustration comes from the publishers in the huge and complex machine that drives the mass media, where a photographer's voice amounts to nothing.

SFP *The Afonauts* reconstructs a dream from the past several decades later, creating images of something that never happened. What do you think about the possibility of using photography to build the future instead of the past? Could something like a photojournalism of the future exist?

CM This is a different debate altogether: what photography is and what it isn't. The same discussion we had about the analogue and the digital could now take place about the real and the virtual. The real would be what you have taken a picture of, thanks to a physical and optical capturing process – not so much what is truthful –, the virtual would be that which generates a reality through a computer. Although I'm not against it, I have my own questions about this. For me, photography-at least under this name- will always be the capturing of something that is before the camera. Whether you have constructed it or set it up is not important, but something has to be in front of a camera or an image-capturing device. I don't know whether photography, in that sense, can capture the future. I could use photographers' speculations and, perhaps, illustrate experts' visions or predictions, reconstructing them. Photography, for better or worse, always acts in the past: from the moment you take the photo it works backward in time, not forward. Although I might regret having said this in a few years' time.

In the same way a writer writes a science fiction work, a photographer can write events, creating a reality that is exactly like these events, before the camera. While several different writing genres may coexist within a newspaper, in terms of photography there are only one or two: the portrait, within documentary, and illustration, within editorial photography and in relation to a specific subject. I hope the same will happen with photography as with literature.

SFP You once said «we're going to drive the archaeologists of the future crazy». This sentence relates to an idea that I often think about: the future interpretation of everything we produce without the interpretation that we – or our era – have given it. To verify whether it's true that things can speak for themselves, among them images. Although closely related to its present, photography – as a document, like the archive – always projects itself towards the future. Also towards those who cannot be where the photographer has been. Do images speak for themselves? Could the archaeologists of the future decipher them without knowing the history of how they were received?

CM If the archaeologists of that future to come are any good, they will not try to describe our civilisation through two or three texts found in a newspaper. Once they get over the shock of understanding, for example, what the sculptures on the roundabout in Spain are, I suppose they will see how complex the society we live in today really is. They will also learn to read the nuances in our opinions. The amount of information to be analysed will be so overwhelming that they might return to their planet without even trying. What I mean by this joke is that there is so much contradictory information, there are so many versions, that it seems logical to me that they would back out of their mission. If you think about it, the archaeologists of the present have it easy deciphering Rosetta's stone, as it's a single element and not a boundless amount of terabytes of information, books, sculptures and... roundabouts. What's more, they might understand why we have come to an end as a civilisation.

This idea of an archaeology of the future came up together with a friend with whom I am making a reduced version of the utopian project I mentioned at the beginning. We would like to carry out a project that is an archaeology of the future,

imagining that aliens land on Earth and only have those typical Spanish roundabouts to decipher.

SFP There is a certain nostalgia for the past in our era. The continuous revivals and the increasingly retro attitude show this. Photography also seems to suffer from an aesthetic nostalgia, especially the amateur photography we produce on a daily basis. The old, when it becomes antique, also becomes elegant. In your opinion, where does that nostalgic attitude come from?

CM I see myself as a privileged person because I live at this moment in time. It is one of the most interesting times that we have seen. Never before has the human race been so exposed to complexity as it is now. I understand that this nostalgia you mention exists, especially in relation to photography and in relation to the way our parents used to take pictures during our childhood. In a way, we want to recreate and generate documents that make us feel good when we see them. It seems logical to me; this wish to imitate our parents, repeating their achievements, corresponds with a sort of life cycle. The family album is one of those achievements, something we think they did well. It is because of it that people with kids take so many pictures nowadays, almost always using filters with a retro aesthetic. I suppose they want the child to have an aesthetically beautiful memory of his childhood when, at the age of 16, he will look back at his images. What we cannot know is whether this aesthetic will still be a valid one, or whether it will be seen as tacky.

SFP A demand to change things weighs on the artist and on the photographer too. To make the world a better place, possibly by revealing its defects. To make an image that will achieve everything the media doesn't. We ask the image to have an

effect over reality when it operates in the field of representation. How do you feel about this demand to act upon reality?

CM The problem I see in these demands we make on documentary images is that they're based on a strategy that no longer works. The link between an image and the reaction it provokes has changed. Although we continue to use it, it doesn't work. We have to update the operative system of images because it doesn't work. This demand is, in addition, based on feelings of guilt. When we're shown a photo of a refugee camp in Somalia, they make us guilty of the situation.

I would even say – and maybe I'm treading dangerous ground here – that the photojournalist who goes to certain places offers an expiatory point, indicating to the rest of us what we must do. I personally had this feeling, which made me stop working as a documentary journalist. If one wants to help someone, or to improve a specific situation, going somewhere, taking a picture, trying to sell it, trying to get someone to see it, and then trying to make others react how one thinks they should is a pretty weak strategy. There are other tools, of direct action, to change things. That is why this attitude of «nation saver» or «superhero» often bothers me in photojournalists who are, at the end of the day, spending money on a camera and travels without knowing whether their photos will be published or not. With the aggravating fact that those photographed are told that a photograph will help them improve their situation. If, for example, that photo is presented at a competition, it is also a bad strategy. In any case, it needs to be published, even for free, for its function to be fulfilled and to thus close the cycle. The photograph no longer denounces a reality. A Youtube video is more useful to get to know what is going on in the world than many newspapers.

SFP Going back to *The Afronauts*, to the space race towards Mars, Edward Makuka's optimistic dream seems more alive than ever. The first mission of the Dutch project *Mars One* is to establish a permanent human colony on Mars by 2025. Makuka's project intended to insert Africa into a space race dominated by the USA and the USSR, two world powers. *Mars One* is a Western project set up as an open call for anyone interested in taking part, and who also accepts that there will be no return trip. Both projects, like any other space race, are symptomatic of how our relationship with outer space is a colonialist territorial one. I'm surprised that no one questions whether we have any right to assume that other planets belong to us. I don't know what you think about this...

CM I didn't know about that project, although I knew of the growing interest in Mars. I have always been very sceptical about the conquest of the moon. I even defend the fact it was Kubrick who built the whole thing. I also imagine that it could have been NASA's accounting department who decided to go for the cheapest set design. I don't lose sight of how small we are in the Universe and of the tiny noise we make despite all the bombs we throw. For example, a robot is placed on Mars, taking up all the front pages of the newspapers, and in a small column, on the same page, another story says that forty new galaxies have been discovered. I understand that the former is an achievement, but perhaps we should take it with a pinch of salt. I find it more interesting to survive here, on Earth, than to look for other places to spoil.

SFP The exhibition *The Future Won't Wait* points to how our imagination is subject to the production conditions of the time. Which is why I would like to end this interview with a question

we've all been asked and that is related to this. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

CM The truth is that if you mean a profession, I never imagined myself in one as a child. I never wanted to be an astronaut, nor a policeman, a fireman, a politician, a boss, a queen, or a princess. But I have always imagined myself as an old lady in the countryside, with many books, a horse, and two dogs. What's more, I think I am on the right track to becoming one.

This matter would lead us to the education system, to how it forces us to pigeonhole ourselves and take decisions that affect the rest of our lives based on learning that is focused on memorising rather than on reasoning. During childhood, there was no one to ask us honestly and without constraints what we would like to be, or how we imagined ourselves as adults. Nor to really help us achieve it.

Cristina de Middel is a photographer whose work investigates photography's ambiguous relationship to truth. Blending documentary and conceptual photographic practices, her work asks the audience to question the language and veracity of photography as a document and plays with reconstructions and archetypes that blur the border between reality and fiction. After a successful career as a photojournalist, working with newspapers in Spain and non-government organizations including Doctors Without Borders and the Spanish Red Cross, de Middel discovered that she had become disappointed in photojournalism and its reliance on the consumption of "authentic" images and the untruths that accompany them. Stepping outside of the photojournalistic gaze, de Middel produced the critically acclaimed series *The Afonauts* in 2012, which explored the history of a failed space program in Zambia in the 1960s through staged reenactments of obscure narratives. De Middel's work shows that fiction can serve as the subject of photography just as well as facts can, highlighting that our expectation that photography must always make reference to reality is flawed. De Middel has exhibited extensively internationally and has received numerous awards and nominations, including *PhotoFolio Arles 2012*, the *Deutsche Börse Prize*, *POPCAP' 13*, and the *Infinity Award* from the International Center of Photography in New York. De Middel lives and works in London.

## Regina de Miguel

SFP I would like to begin by talking about utopia, a notion that is closely associated with desire. Yet, to point to a theme that is present in your work, utopias – just like desires – are not innocent. There are many factors that produce them or make them possible. Which utopian project has most impressed you so far? Do you have any personal project that could be seen as utopian?

RM My interest in working on the utopian drive and the future is, as you anticipated, due to its being a space of conflict inherent to the planning and projection of desires, fears, and hopes, both individual and collective.

«Futurist technologies» (mythical/religious time, scientific research...) have been proven to be obsolete in their elaboration of such representations, and the methodologies to study them have only been dealt with superficially. More so than the historical sciences, the best tool to critically analyse these projections has been science fiction. It has been a component of my work, not in terms of affirmation or as a mere imaginative receptacle, but as a technology that draws attention to our current difficulty to deal with otherness.

It's hard to think about the idea of individual or collective utopia without totally reconsidering the principles that constitute it. This problem seems to arise in Western, anthropocentric, and modern ontology. The very creation of the concept of «the future» as a parameter for observation belongs to specific circumstances that are not related to the experience of civilisations that came before ours, where a linear, progressive, and homogenous future did not exist. This, on the other hand, is now comparable to the fragmentation of time and space in the virtual world.

A possible utopian drive, in my opinion, will in no way emerge out of individual processes. To begin with, the present

## Paradigm, Collapse and Agency

moment demands a decolonisation of hegemonic thinking, and a shift in the regulatory axes of knowledge.



Future My Love, Maja Borg, 2012

SFP The future, both in science fiction and in its «real» version, establishes a relationship of mutual dependence with technology. We could say, paraphrasing Gabriel Celaya, that «technology is a weapon loaded with future». What would the repopulation of technology that you mention consist of?

RM As a set of policies, abilities, and strategies set in motion to fabricate (material and immaterial) machines and artefacts that determine human desires and needs, technology's first concern comes from a tradition of pseudo – scientific thought that attempts to explain the world in order to dominate it, based on a desire for conquest, and a faith in limitless progress aimed towards reaching «absolute truth».

The correspondence between technology and the future that you mention can be detected in our need to formulate them together. In *Archaeologies of the Future*, Jameson affirms that, in the same way as the mythological figure of the Chimera is made up of fragments of pre – existing beings (a lion's head, a goat's body, a serpent's tail), our capacity to imagine the future has been subjected to the modes of production and the material conditions of the present. The dismantling of this system is the laborious and interesting task that concerns us.



Chimera

Oddly enough, we also find some clues in the poem by Celaya that you used to build your aphorism:

*Quisiera darles vida, provocar nuevos actos,  
y calculo por eso con técnica qué puedo.  
[I'd want to give you life, incite new acts,  
And for it I calculate with technology what I can do]*

SFP In relation to the production of knowledge, what would those hidden perspectives that you mention be?

RM All the cosmologies that have remained in the margins, the dissident paradigms that have been intentionally pushed aside or repressed, the infinite forms of existence that haven't been conjured up through the disingenuous traditional separation between nature and culture.

It is precisely at this moment of systemic collapse that we must deal with these historical ruptures and omissions of content in order to understand the need to get rid of the traditional patterns applied to technological activity.

These thoughts lead us to get rid of distinctions between forms of knowledge, as well as the positions of power where these are generated. We could then affirm that the task of shaping and informing is not an exclusively human activity or privilege, but something undertaken by all existing beings, be they alive or artificial. All of them have a particular psychic reality.

For example, astrobiology is a new science that faces one of philosophy's biggest questions: what is life? Its very gen-

esis contains the following aporia: although we know that life is made up of particles, and that our thoughts and consciences are a result of their many combinations, as humans we are only capable of observing certain forms of life, all of which are on Earth. Therefore these are the only ones we can recognise.



SFP Your last statement inevitably reminds me of a text I discovered through one of your projects (*Nouvelle Vague Science Fiction*). I mean *Solaris*, by Stanislaw Lem, and the failure of science to understand an intelligent life form unknown until then: that of the planet Solaris. The non-innocent division of knowledge that you mention could be associated with your work. On the one hand, you dismiss any connection with the erroneous (though common) idea that sees art as something transcendental but innocuous. On the other hand, you have been moving closer to the field of science through a critical fascination that questions some of its narratives, whilst feeding off others. How do you, through art, face the vertigo generated by such big questions?

RM Foucault and Feyerabend question the discursive narrative about scientific procedures constructed by philosophers and methodologists. The latter states that the history of science is very complex and contains as many mistakes as ideas. Nevertheless, due to the fact it was reconstructed in the shape of an objective and accessible «narrative» (through an approach made up of an architecture of strict rules and text-based resources), it produces a «truth effect».

The strategies of both authors – epistemological anarchy and anarchaeology –, could help us stop seeing ideas of truth and infallibility as qualities that are inherent to knowledge. In this way, a subjective position is generated from which we can develop a resistance that does not simply consist of discrediting or criticising judgments by claiming them to be false, but that questions the concept of truth as something absolute and closed.

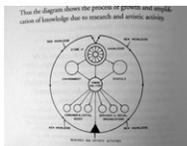
From my perspective, the artificial or «practical» separation of forms of knowledge has forced art into the position of an «autonomous» language, and this emancipation is paradoxical, as it isn't based on social agency the way other areas of knowledge are.

We artists work with any object existing in the world. Yet these are always mediated or explained from the standpoint of scientific reason, and the discursive methods and approaches to reality that come from it. The social sciences, history, education, etc., are starting to filter in so that it is finally incredibly complicated to make oneself understood, or to take on a role as a social agent within logics that are, as a matter of principle, apparently ineffective.

At the same time, we must admit that the majority of art's modes of production and distribution are commonly generated within circuits that feed back on themselves, and which are not very permeable.

The thinking goes: What do we consider an artwork to be? A cultural artefact shouldn't only be produced within an academic sphere, an archetype of style, or the institutional contexts of the world of Art. If so, it must be critical of them.

We have to trust in the processes that intersect with other fields, in hybrid practices, we must look for a polysemy or cacophony of new critical and reflective protocols beyond cynical or purely celebratory posturing.



*A Taxilogy of Pictorial Knowledge*  
vols. 1-10 (Oxford: Pergamon Press), 1968.  
Re-edition by Nuno da Luz. Atlas Projectos

SFP The scientific field occupies a privileged area on my map of knowledge. Its authority is larger than that of other fields of knowledge. In order to be effective, authority needs the obedience of others. An obedience that is reinforced by laziness, by the knowing carelessness we take on when we voluntarily place ourselves in the position of the inexperienced. When it comes to the future, which affects us all, I sometimes feel that – like many other things – we leave it in the hands of professionals. It is not just what we know that is affected by the hierarchy of knowledge, but what we don't know. Yet your attitude reveals that your position as an outsider isn't the result of an intrusion, but of a reflexive curiosity. I imagine that, as an artist, it must be a little scary to enter the scientific field. When did your need to cross the limits of art, and consequently, of science, emerge?

RM I don't recall any «enlightened» moment, but a chain of research and learning. From the beginning of my practice, I have naturally combined my personal work with collective and experimental processes of different kinds, believing that exchanging roles with other agents and generating content through a multi-faceted profile would be more substantial than a unidirectional practice, which is limiting in terms of learning and of its transformative capacity.

Personally, I don't think about authorship in terms of «originality», but as something that is directed towards the activation of intention. Some projects I have been involved in have emerged from the will to share something beyond what common art spaces can offer, as a meeting point between

people that can give meaning to practice, fulfilling a role that has been neglected by many institutions.

The conditions and situations fostered by these contexts have a great potential in that they give rise to synergies where work may run its course more freely, and where what is most interesting is the time given to process, or what can be derived from it, without aiming for concrete formalisations. Nevertheless, it's important to have a favourable institutional atmosphere where the activity of those involved in these projects doesn't necessarily turn into militancy or into a burden, beyond its main intentions.

Collaborations would hence emerge naturally, and independent initiatives would receive attention from the rest of the agents, allowing for a productive contamination that would generate genuine social impact. This rarely happens though, and in some contexts it doesn't happen at all, so some of these initiatives are very short lived, partly due to the exhaustion of the actors sustaining them. I suppose it all comes down to what is considered to be public, to the type of social constructions we aspire to.

Some projects require a long research process, self-directed learning, continuous training, and experimentation, all of which are not taken into account in the grants provided by institutions or organisations. This is the result of a difficulty in the understanding of creative processes, of how society rarely sees our activity as a professional one, or misunderstands it altogether.

Certainly, when it comes to deciding what to finance, I cannot separate process from results, because when there is research and a coherent approach involved, both are present. It's normal for ideas to lead to forms, as forms are the conductors of thought or of poetics, so every phase is important. «Results» often lead to the next search, in an infinite chain.

The question is to allow for the results to be mistaken or inconclusive, in a practical sense.

SFP The dialectics between the «I» and the «we» that you mention in relation to art makes me think that, once again, against common beliefs, all projects are somehow collective ones. This is explicit when there are various members involved, implicit because they always need or feed off other people. The «we» inside the «I» takes me back to the beginning of this interview: a utopia that is also a failure. As Marina Garcés says, the word «us» names a problem, not a reality. I also believe that the fiction of individualism is accompanied by the fiction of the collective, which is seen as morally superior. The singular signature of an artist is also the imprint of his/her collaborators. Perhaps then Regina de Miguel is a name that also has space for others. How do you perceive and experiment the functioning of that «we» in a field of contradictory forces such as the art world, where the rejection of the self-sufficient individual is accompanied by a strong demand for individuality from the artist?

RM A few months ago I was invited to a meeting in Ringenberg, on the border between The Netherlands and Germany, to think and work on the idea of non-productivity as a critical attitude in art, together with other artists, editors, curators, etc.

With the phrase «I would prefer not to» in mind, the idea was to share practical or theoretical viewpoints amongst the participants, who came from different places in Europe. This «I would prefer not to» associated with art research seems to refer to how difficult it is to define without going through the discipline and normalisation of capitalism's modes of knowledge production.

From my position as an artist I chose not to present my work, despite the fact the research I develop around conditions

of knowledge production is related to this subject. Instead, I thought up an exercise that, whilst not being completely unproductive, produced in a low intensity. I proposed a collective reading of a text that is key for the interpretation of these zones of conflict: *The Aesthetics of Resistance*, by Peter Weiss. To be precise, the opening description of the Pergamon altar.



Pergamon Altar, Berlin, 2014.  
Protests in Athens, December, 2013

In this novel, the author elaborates a detailed chronicle of the antifascist struggle, while proposing alternative readings on official history through other artworks such as the altar. The description of the battle between men and the gods is told as a revolutionary tale here, paying attention to both the material and social conditions of the time when it was made, as well as the context it is exhibited and contemplated in today.

That is to say, we can only understand how our cultural practices are affected by the circumstances of politics and power when we contextualise them within social and historical conflicts. And it is true that we must remain attentive and trust in practices and investigations that are capable of acting socially, and therefore involved in processes of revolutionary transformation, tracing another genealogy that calls for works of art that remain far from the «autonomy» of language or the perpetuation of the singular genius.

SFP I wonder whether artists back then would have been capable of predicting what their social function is today, a function that runs the risk of being a countervailing one. Returning to the present, I think about all the art practices

that review history through the necessary intention of re-writing it from a different perspective. With a timid jump to the future, I imagine art that might be able to contribute an experience of the future without falling into a fascination with technology, or the paralysis resulting from utopian breakdown. Are we stuck in a retroactive present? Have we given up on the future by thinking it has abandoned us too soon?

RM I think the total opposite. Although throughout this conversation I have said that the archetypes we have used throughout history to negotiate and articulate the idea of the future have proven to be obsolete and inefficient, I do firmly believe that something is changing at the moment. We are trying to articulate something new in terms of thinking, and this clearly concerns those of us involved in the field of culture. By this I mean a culture that doesn't circulate through official systems. I don't think that we adopt a compensatory role. I also don't think that our mediation with technology is problematic. As I was saying, what will generate a change is the way that we think about ourselves collectively. It is certainly complex and surely we have been thinking sceptically, from a certain point of darkness even, but intentions are beginning to be more than proactive.

SFP To finish off, I would like to turn to your childhood, to that moment when projections of the future are a constant and are not run through by the fear that our decisions might not be the right ones. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

RM As a child I thought I would be immortal, and that I would turn into everything I wanted to be.



Sarcophagus of Santa Regina with the hole through which they could touch his remains, (photograph of 1923). Monte Avoix, Alise - Sainte - Reine (Francia)

It is the year 2045 and I exist on Earth in the form of a bacteria. I am now an extremophile micro-organism (from the word extreme, and from the Greek φιλία =affection, love, that is to say, "lover of extreme-conditions").

To be specific, I am of the tardigrade type. I am capable of putting my metabolic processes on hold, and remaining almost dead for centuries if needed to survive a borderline situation. I am also capable of living without water for 10 years, and of enduring very high pressure. Up until not so long ago, this was inconceivable for a life form such as mine.

I will abandon this planet to live in Europe, Jupiter's moon. It will be my first time after having been here from the start. Before anything.

Here I have gone through an infinity of lives, both animated and inert. All of them have given me a personal viewpoint, a singular psychic entity. I have also existed as a possibility in the minds of others; as a system of thought; as a theory; as an action.

When they come to an end, I often leave them behind. Others, however, remain stored in a mental capsule of the future. Those are the ones I don't wish to lose, the ones that speak amongst themselves as if they had known each other forever. And so it is: cosmic radiation accumulated for centuries in a clay vessel, together with tones, flickers and alarms, a long swig that emptied the bottle, failure to find the Ether, a place in Faustine's conscience, the light that escapes from a structural snare, a pandemic, text messages, disappointments, trails of blood on the neck, and Regina, who wondered just how firm the ground she was treading on was. The one who afterwards, at night, jumped into swimming pools.

# Agnieszka Polska

SFP As I've been doing in the other interviews, I'd like to start with a question regarding projection and desire. Do you have any unrealized project that's somewhat a utopian project?

AP In many of my works I'm trying to describe the complicated relations between our present activities, events of the past and our possible future. We already know that it's possible to change the present situation by falsifying history. Up to now I've only been analysing these phenomena but I'm dreaming about taking these speculations to another level: altering the real past event and therefore changing the future for the better. It's a bit similar to the story described in Fassbinder's film *The Niklashausen Journey*: the protagonists are staging a revolution as if they were in the theatre, which leads to real changes.

SFP *Future Days* is an artwork in which the protagonists are several dead artists who were important years ago but some of them are nearly forgotten now. They're in an afterworld that functions as a timeless space in which they meet and discuss art, among other issues. Owing to the fact this timeless condition is their life experience after death, why did you title this work *Future Days*?

AP The title of the film was inspired by the name of an album by (the rock group) Can. I thought it would be the best, most ironic comment on the issues of imaginary life after death. When envisioning the future, what we can be certain about is our death; some of us also expect to continue our existence under different conditions. The title *Future Days* also expresses the melancholy of the state of eternity: the future is the only infinite space, especially for deceased people in heaven.

## States of Eternity

SFP The encounter formulated by *Future Days* has key figures from twentieth-century art such as Bas Jan Ader and Charlotte Posenenske, who meet their Polish contemporaries such as Włodzimierz Borowski, Jerzy Ludwiński and also less-known artists like Paul Thek and Lee Lozano. Andrzej Szewczyk enters the scene as well. Why have some of them been forgotten? Within the many key artists from the twentieth century, why did you choose Jas Ban Ader and Charlotte Posenenske to be involved in this afterlife meeting?

AP The artists that appear in the film share one attribute: they all vanished from the art scene or discredited their own role as an artist. They chose very different ways of withdrawing: Posenenske decided to study sociology instead of doing art, Lozano stopped communicating with people from the art world, Ader disappeared at sea... They're all artists I respect and that influenced me. The legend of some of them has been built up artificially after their death, as it was with Bas Jan Ader. Some of the others never had a chance to exist in international circles because of their Eastern European origins: at the time they were active it wasn't possible to travel freely abroad from socialist Poland.

SFP The situation proposed by *Future Days* produces a particular effect on artists. When entering into contact with eternity, fear of death and oblivion cease to exist. But the need to create art vanishes. From this point of view, are death and oblivion the main thrust of artistic creation?

AP Some of the artists present in the film were creating art strongly bound to the issues of death and evanescence (for example Andrzej Szewczyk). I imagine such an attitude would not be possible without the knowledge of an imminent end.

But the notion of «art in eternity» also has another aspect: is it possible to be creative under conditions that exclude the possibility of any change? In one scene Charlotte Posenenske says: «With an endless repetition of our transient moves we can design eternity». This sentence I put in her mouth expresses both hope and great sorrow. Art isn't important anymore, when we think of it on a scale of infinite future. Or, put a different way, art isn't important in a world without time boundaries, where everything will happen anyway, sooner or later.

SFP Jerzy Ludwiński suggested that we are living in a «post-art epoch» and that new experimental artistic practices require a new name and language. If Jerzy Ludwiński were alive, would he say that contemporary art has succeeded in creating this new language he called for so long ago?

AP I'm sure Ludwiński would see the present situation as one of greater possibilities. As he was a great advocate of immaterial art or, as he called it, impossible art, he would probably see the internet as a big opportunity for art. His vision of the new language of art was, for example, art transmitted to a viewer through telepathy. I'm sure it'll be possible to make his ideas happen one day. At the same time he'd probably see the present aestheticization and marketization of art as a danger.

SFP In several of your works you reclaim a history of art that is somehow non-canonical, with particular attention to the context of Polish art. Boris Groys says that one of the characteristics of art is its projection into the future, creating a potential eternity. Your work proves that future time is wrapped in oblivion and it also demonstrates that collective memory is hierarchical. Where does your interest in the past of contemporary art come from? Is oblivion temporary or can it be reversed?

AP Interest in past art is a natural part of the practice of an artist and forgetfulness is a natural part of human existence. I have used the elements of «controlled mourning» many times in my practice and many of my films are devoted to certain figures from the past. What is very interesting to me is that, in the course of the process of mourning, we somehow annihilate the mourned individual.

SFP When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

AP I think I always wanted to be an artist, though I didn't have a very clear idea of what it really means.



People say it's crucial to leave the stage at the right time; unfortunately that was not to be the case with Agnieszka Polska. Despite interest in her work being in decline for a long time, she hesitated to make the simple decision to leave her occupation as an artist. Eventually, because of money problems and with a hungry family in tow, she decided to move back to the job she'd had during her student years, as a cleaning lady in a hotel. The relief was short-lived: not long thereafter, Polska was accused of not changing the bed sheets and promptly fired. It's not clear how the former artist spent the last years of her life; her children remember her talk of a novel she was writing but it was never published and no manuscripts were found after her death. Back in the years of prosperity, she was the author of many solo shows, including: *I Am the Mouth* at Nottingham Contemporary (2014); *Pseudoword Hazards* at the Salzburger Kunstverein (2013); *How the Work is Done* at the PinchukArtCentre in Kyiv, (2012); *Aurorite* at the CCA Ujazdowski Castle in Warsaw (2012). Her works were exhibited in: *You Imagine What You Desire*, 19th Biennale of Sydney (2014); *Mom, Am I Barbarian?*, 13th Istanbul Biennial (2013); *The Black Moon*, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2013); *Future Generation Art Prize*, PinchukArtCentre, Kyiv (2012); *SOUNDWORKS*, ICA, London (2012); *Early Years*, Kunst-Werke Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2010).

# Jaron Rowan

## Exercises in Speculation Through Matter

SFP Utopia, though frowned upon in the past years, is, together with science fiction, one of our best tools for approaching the future. And a good start for this interview. Are there any particular utopian projects that you are interested in?

JR That's a strong start. I'm going to get a coffee. I don't take milk; I'm lactose intolerant, now I prefer rice milk to soya milk. I'll sit down. I don't agree with the idea that utopia and science fiction bring us closer to the future. They're both excellent devices to enable exercises in speculation. Both cases allow us to project. To stretch out certain present moments and throw them into the field of speculation. They don't bring us closer to the future; they allow us to comment on the present. Good science fiction reads the present well. It understands what is going on and dares to infer its possible consequences.

We are in a moment of crisis at the moment; it's only natural to imagine situations where our lives could be lived more fully. Collective negotiation deals with whether what is projected is a utopia or whether it is plausible. To transform what is desirable into what is possible. It is at this moment that we begin to negotiate categories such as the possible, the desirable, the utopian and the dystopian; gradients of speculative thinking, parameters within which we can move, without falling into the hands of fantasy. In this sense, I am not interested in any specific utopian project, I'm interested in the feasible not being limited by the utopian. To find ways of defining possible collective forms.

SFP In our present relationship with the future, utopia and science fiction appear together with futurology, a new science to see the future based on scientific methods. Or to at least see speculative possibilities around it. Nevertheless, many of us are a bit sceptical of scientific research. For example,

Fredric Jameson defines it as «a specialist form of institutional politics». Would futurology then be run through by an idea of scientific progress we find hard to believe in?

JR Your questions are very elaborate. Where are you from? What did you study? I disagree a little. Futurology is a methodology of speculation that claims to offer plausible future scenarios. It is not exclusively based on science. Futurologists observe the state of scientific progress, technological development, social change, new interpersonal conduct/behaviour, contemporary narratives, consumer trends, etc. to predict the future with the aim of both encouraging the design of technology/specific objects, and to avoid certain trends that are seen as damaging or destructive. The methodology used by futurologists differs a lot. Let us not forget that fortune-tellers, astrologists, psychics, etc. also have their own methodologies to predict the future. Bruce Sterling is a sharp observer of the present and uses the narrative medium to explore the future. Toffler analyses technological development in order to make predictions. Predictive algorithms affect the markets, which are always a few steps ahead. The massive clustering of data allows us to pre-establish possible patterns of conduct. In essence, we are saying that the most scientific element of futurology is probability. Many things can happen. If we lived in a world defined by linearity, futurology wouldn't make much sense. The improbable often happens. What is possible doesn't always happen. I suppose that what is interesting about futurology, in the world of design, is that by creating prototypes, and, on occasion, developing technology through speculation, it manages to close the indeterminacy of the future. Futurology applied to design makes the future happen because the future is the object of design. Fiction operates along these lines, not merely offering technical solutions to problems that are yet to come,

but also imagining the aesthetics that will define us. Right now it is interesting to use speculation to create designs for the near future, to face emerging problems that require something more than a mere technical solution. Changing reality through the materialisation of thought. In this way the speculative becomes a material practice, not a form of idealism. To be precise, the aim is not to develop a science of the future, but to analyse the state of science as a parameter that can determine certain progressions.

SFP In relation to futurology, Stanislaw Lem's novel *The Futurological Congress* inevitably springs to mind, where science fiction is capable of turning into scientific fiction. This happens in *Solaris* thanks to Solaristics, a failed science created from this intelligent planet. If we think about science fiction as a medium, and not as a literary genre, what can futurology contribute to it? And what about science itself?

JR Through science fiction, futurology is allowed to expand beyond what is probable. But sometimes, due to this, it predicts events even better. Science fiction doesn't only think in terms of technology, objects, or scientific discoveries, but produces aesthetics and desires. Futurology must know how to read desire, and allow itself to be influenced by it. Science fiction produces desire, and as we know by now, the production of desire is the production of universes. Who hasn't wished to be teleported after seeing *Star Trek*? Who hasn't wanted to travel to the moon after reading Verne? Who doesn't want a system of artificial intelligence that will help him navigate his life like HAL? Who hasn't wished for an interface that allows one to navigate by dragging the items with one's fingers, as in *Minority Report*? It's interesting to see how certain aesthetics define the way events, technology, worlds, and desires that are

about to happen will take place. Sonia, what do you wish for? The production of aesthetic paradigms impregnates everything. It defines ways of living and being in the world. I think that a great part of science fiction (with its contradictions, mistakes, and its misogyny) helps certain ideas to materialise; it makes them concrete by providing us with references and creating expectations. It collaborates with technology and with science. We cannot think about the Turing test without thinking about the Voight-Kampff test. Of course, sometimes science fiction reeks of moral platitudes, of premonitory sermons. On other occasions it is concise and essential to understand the present. But in every case it allows us to understand 'the now' better, and to have certain parameters for what could happen.

SFP Regarding the future, speculation seems to be the only possible method. Or perhaps the most undeniable one, seeing as speculation itself acknowledges its own fallibility. Despite the empirical absence of the future, the theory's abstraction may be overcome through objects, transformed into speculative artefacts. How do these objects of the future work?

JR We run into a classical debate here: what is desirable, to reinvent desire, that is, to produce new subjectivities that break with the tendency towards a consumerism without satisfaction, or to change infrastructures and material ways of living in order for that desire to no longer have a place? In short: idealism versus materialism. Here's the question: can we produce new material cultures to discredit neoliberal desire? To make it redundant? Let's imagine a revolution that doesn't emerge from the utopian projection of a new reality, but from changing basic institutions, urban elements, and objects that subjectivise us. I think that thinking through objects allows us to reconnect with a certain kind of materialism that is not based on a dichotomy

(structure-superstructure), but on complexity. To think about transformation itself as being material and not ideal is an interesting challenge. I am not speaking about appropriating the means of production, but about the acceptance of complex agencies. About the crystallisation of certain ideas in institutions, parameters, and infrastructures. To think about forms of innovation that are brought about when we acknowledge the interdependence of bodies on bodies, bodies on technology, technology on technology. To devalue the human in order to enter the film of matter. Objectology provides a point of entry into this neo-materialism, which is closer to an updating of a desirable virtuality than to the projection of possible futures. Objectologies speak to us about degrees of dispersion, types of speed, disparate temporalities, spaces of accumulation, forms of crystallisation, intersections of ideas and materials, in short, to overcome the immaterial/intangible/material/concrete. These objects that think sometimes allow us to think next to them.

SFP Following up on the object, speculative realism seems to place it in a position that appeared to be the privilege of human beings: that of ontology. If the various futures proposed by science fiction are not valuable due to their realism, but to their dissent with the real and their ontological potential, what relations can be traced between speculative realism and the speculation on the future?

JR Mmmmh... I don't think we need to mix them up, or not too much. That is to say, speculative realism tells us there are ways of being in the world that don't include thinking that the world exists as a result of humans' ability to perceive. In order for objects to exist (both human and non-human objects) it is not necessary for humans to think about them, there need

not be a correlation between the fact that things exist and the fact that we think about them. Since we have a tendency to interrelate, we can use speculation to imagine other ontologies, non-human ways of being. Speculative realism doesn't need the future in order to unfold its system; it needs a certain de-humanisation of thought. To turn ourselves into objects and place ourselves in a symmetrical relationship with other objects. To accept distributed agencies. Intentions are not the only factors that define action. I think that speculative realism doesn't need to make use of science fiction to imagine possible worlds. Instead, it proposes that we pay attention to worlds that are already in existence. The third table was there all along. What would you like for dinner, huh, Ktulu?

SFP Thinking about the future from the present and from the reality of the current system, its manipulation seems to be a crucial tool for the construction of neoliberalism and its continuous promises to itself. While punk's «no future» claims affect many of us, there does seem to be a future, however, for privileged members of this system. As a space for projection, has the future been broken down by the system, and, as a result, has it made the list of things that don't belong to us longer?

JR Nihilism gives us freedom. By suppressing the future it throws us into a present of the most absolute intensity. The punk phenomenon had something to do with this. In an atmosphere of crisis you may choose to imagine a better future (which is what I think is happening now), or to get rid of the future and concentrate on blowing up the present. The question is, does suppressing the future suppress desire? Neoliberal capitalism is based on the production of a desire for individual freedom, on the idea of autonomy. The autonomous subject needs all sorts of gadgets, objects, and technology to help him

maintain the illusion of autonomy. Corporate R+D needs to fasten itself to a linear timeline in order to conceive the objects we are going to desire, need, and finally find indispensable. «No future» broke that timeline. There's no future, so we're going to drink and get wasted on speed. What could be the other spaces of innovation that allow us to design non-linear futures? What spaces of interdependence must we take on? What bodies must we create for ourselves in order to escape from the theology of being myself tomorrow? How do we materialise a becoming that won't determine us? Perhaps getting wasted on cider and *speed* isn't such a bad idea after all.

SFP To return to the personal and going back in time a little: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

JR Ana Pastor's secret lover.

Jaron in the future, while smoking a pipe and stroking his robodog, smiles as he rereads this interview.