

A GATEWAY TO POSSIBLE WORLDS. ART & SCIENCE-FICTION

EXHIBITION | 05.11.22 – 17.04.23 (TO BE CONFIRMED)

GRANDE NEF & GALERIE 3

PRESS RELEASE

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OPENING HOURS

Every day, except Tuesdays and May 1st

01.11 > 31.03
MON. | WED. | THU. | FR. | SAT. | SUN. | 10 am – 6 pm

01.04 > 31.10
MON. | WED. | THU. | 10 am – 6 pm
FR. | SAT. | SUN. | 10 am – 7 pm

EXHIBITION ADMISSION

Individual Admission: 7€ /10€ /12€
based on the number of exhibition spaces open

Group Rates (from 20 people): 5,50€, 8€, 10€
based on the number of exhibition spaces open

Credits :
Larissa Sansour, *Nation estate*, 2012
film, 9'
© Larissa Sansour

The American author Ray Bradbury said: «Science fiction is the art of the possible.» Under the guise of anticipating the future, it speaks to us of the present; it is a laboratory of hypotheses that manipulate and extrapolate the repressive norms and dogmas of today's world, its ambitions, social afflictions, opportunities and perils.

A Gateway to Possible Worlds exhibition brings together over 200 works from the late 1960s to the present day. Art & Science Fiction whisks visitors away to a 2300m² sci-fi world. It puts the spotlight on the bonds between imaginary worlds and our reality with the help of artists, authors, architects and film directors. It builds on current demands for 21st century utopias to spark debate, inspiration and a form of hope.



Behind A Gateway To Possible Worlds

The unthinkable came to pass in mid-March 2020: the world went into lockdown to try to combat a pandemic that was ripping through the world. The slowdown of our frenzied society was abrupt, brutal and nothing we'd ever experienced before. The forced inertia - no contact, curfews, economic and cultural activities coming to a standstill, empty towns and cities straight out of a Chirico painting, the waiting, suddenly so much free time - turned the present day into an otherworldly experience that felt like something from a sci-fi film. The idea of an exhibition blending science fiction with plastic arts came during this time that enforced the dawn of a «liquid» form of the present, blowing everything we believed to pieces and revealing an individual and social burnout that reflects the burnout of natural resources.

« If You Find this World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others.¹ »
Possibilities to put an end to the apocalypse

The future is tomorrow. We live on the brink, in a time of exploration and science fiction. With visions of the future in mind, die-hard dystopias have been all the rage since the end of the modern age with its concept of constant progress. According to Fredric Jameson, the present stands out for the loss of history, not just the past but future too. This incapability of dealing with time and history is a pathological symptom of late capitalism².

Dystopias may be an essential reminder that economic and social models have an expiry date, but they also have a crippling effect. Plastic arts and sci-fi literature have quietly turned a corner over the last decade. There has been a change in paradigm that doesn't attempt to conceal the risks it involves but also gives us a glimpse of an appealing future. Just like the Zanzibar author collective (some of whom were involved in writing the exhibition catalogue) who strive to «free the future» or Solarpunk's quietly optimistic vision despite the crumbling environment today, sci-fi boldly puts an end to the swan song to relieve us of the burden of hidden perspectives. Nothing is set in stone, every MO, doctrine and fate has been imagined at some point. It's up to our imagination to make the change.

A Gateway To Possible Worlds. Art & Science-Fiction is based on current demand for new 21st century utopias to immerse visitors in alternate realities. Utopia is a form of intellectual freedom where you can assess future plans away from what is achievable in the here and now, but it has a direct effect on the present. Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, science fiction continues to forge our vision of the future and helps build it. Changing the imaginary world and semantics also means influencing the trajectory of societies. The project intends to take back control of the future.

Resistance through imagination: sci-fi, a rebel genre

There are no almighty superheroes, no rows of gleaming shuttles, no intergalactic wars, no little green men or clinking robots in this exhibition. These ever-popular images kept alive by commercial blockbusters reflect the genre when it was in its infancy, the so-called «heyday» of science fiction (1930s-late 1950s).

The project is true to a speculative form of sci-fi which appeared just before the anti-establishment hippy movements, when the slightly naive «space age» excitement for futurism and technology was tinged with an outdated air. Visionary «new wave» sci-fi swapped space for something closer to home. It explored cracks in our immediate future with authors such as Philip K. Dick, J.G. Ballard and John Brunner.

Themes that cropped up at the time, such as the flagging Vietnam War, the intensifying Cold War and increasing dread of nuclear weapons, are still very topical today: the genre explores issues surrounding relationships of power, distrust of technology due to the widening gap between science and conscience, the drain of natural resources and potential climate apocalypse, the battle to overcome colonialism and patriarchy. Sci-fi uses the pretext of futurism to open our minds to changes that are happening now. It's a laboratory of hypotheses experimenting with the possibilities available in the here and now. It provides a release from dominant political messages and embodies otherness and a profound change in our perception.

¹ Title of the legendary speech by Philip K. Dick in Metz at the second international science fiction festival on September 24th 1977. Published in: Philip K. Dick, *Si ce monde vous déplaît... et autres écrits*, Michel Valensi (pub.), translated by Christophe Wall-Romana, Éditions de l'éclat, Paris, 1998.

² Fredric Jameson, *Archéologies du futur. Le désir nommé utopie*, Tome 2 «Penser avec la science-fiction», translated from English (U.S.A.) by Nicolas Vieillescazes, Max Milo, Paris, 2008, p. 31.

It has always been a hotbed for anti-establishment movements, just like cyberpunk, biopunk and afrofuturism that the exhibition puts in the spotlight. Visual arts over the last fifteen years in particular have produced myriad artworks from the sci-fi universe. Alongside hippy counterculture figureheads such as **Superstudio** or **Tetsumi Kudo** and punk pioneers such as **Anita Molinero** or **Linder Sterling**, this exhibition gives pride of place to the new generation of artists that are still underrated by public collections. The new guard delves into the melting pot of speculative fiction to shake up the established order and broaden our view of otherness.

Exhibition curator:
Alexandra Müller, Centre Pompidou-Metz



Wangechi Mutu, *The End of eating Everything*, 2013
Animation vidéo, 8'10"

© Wangechi Mutu / Courtesy of the Artist, Gladstone Gallery and Victoria Miro Commissioned by the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University