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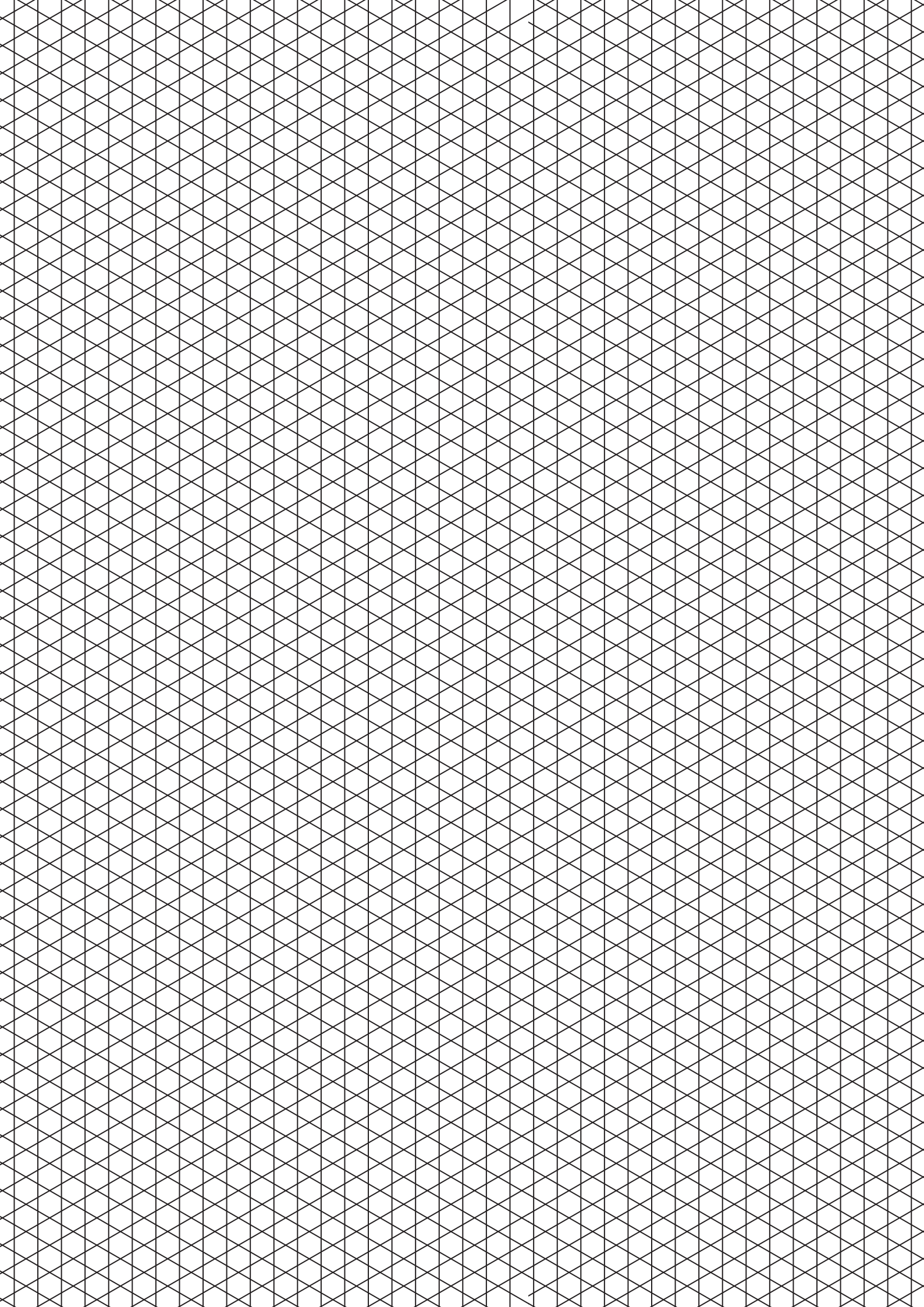
WORLD BUILDING

JEUX VIDÉO
ET ART À
L'ÈRE DIGITALE

PRESS KIT

WORLDBUILDING: GAMING AND ART IN THE DIGITAL AGE





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1. PRESENTATION

WORLDBUILDING

Gaming and Art in the Digital Age

From June 10th, 2023 to January 15th, 2024

Gallery 3

Curator: Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries, London



WORLDBUILDING: Gaming and Art in the Digital Age will explore the different ways in which contemporary artists have engaged with video games and made them into a new art form. Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries, this exhibition will take place on the third floor of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, a gallery space conceived by architect Shigeru Ban. Transforming this already extraordinary floor into one big lively arcade, the show will invite visitors to participate in a variety of experiences. They can play video games while lounging on comfortable couches and easy chairs, wander through multisensory immersive environments, watch a program of short videos in a screening room, and encounter virtual characters like a non-binary orc, a sentient serpentine AI, an extinct Hawaiian songbird, and affectionate trash-absorbing sea creatures.

Certainly, this exhibit focuses on an activity worth reckoning with. In 2022, 3.03 billion people—more than a third of the world’s population—played video games. As Hans Ulrich Obrist asserts, this hobby has become “the biggest mass phenomenon of our time. Many people spend hours every day in a parallel world and live a multitude of different lives. Video games are to the twenty-first century what movies were to the twentieth century and novels to the nineteenth century”. Around a hundred years ago, in his book *Homo Ludens*, the historian Johan Huizinga theorized that play is the basic drive of humankind. Bringing people together in new ways, he contends, play is the source of culture.

More recently, in his book *Games: Agency as Art*, C. Thi Nguyen argues that games, particularly video games, are a distinct type of art which “let us experience forms of agency we might not have discovered on our own”. As such, gaming has the potential to unleash powerful psychic forces. Video games have proven to be an effective tool for the development of training and strategy. Indeed, scientists have made good use of video games simulating biological systems to speculate on the possible origins and destination of life. Accordingly, video games as a digital art form offer a means for an existential quest beyond the embodied physical world and into the multiverse. By their very nature, they open the potential to imagine and build new worlds.

WORLDBUILDING will include 3D animated videos, virtual reality experiences, interactive video game based installations, and videos by artists from around the world: Peggy Ahwesh, Rebecca Allen, Cory Arcangel, Ed Atkins, LaTurbo Avedon, Neil Beloufa, Meriem Bennani, David Blandy & Larry Achiampong, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Ian Cheng, Sara Dibiza, Mimosa Echard, Harun Farocki, Cao Fei, Ed Fornieles, Sarah Friend, Kim Heecheon, Jonathan Horowitz, JODI, Rindon Johnson, KAWS, Keiken, Koo Jeong A, Lawrence Lek, LuYang, Gabriel Massan, Sondra Perry, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, M/M (Paris), Caroline Poggi & Jonathan Vinel, Sara Sadik, Jacolby Satterwhite, Afrah Shafiq, Jakob Kudsk Steensen, Sturtevant, The Institute of Queer Ecology, Transmoderna, Suzanne Treister, Theo Triantafyllidis, Ben Vickers and Angela Washko.

Several of the artists in the exhibit began making work that refers to video games as early as the 1980’s while most of the others were just born around that time. For the works in this show, artists have addressed video games in various ways. Some have adapted their themes and visual style to make videos. Others have modified, hacked, and subverted existing video games. Finally, some have created their own video games. As Hans Ulrich Obrist writes, “traditionally, video games were created by a small and insular group of people... producing games with a very limited perspective. This is now changing rapidly... Artists are increasingly developing the technical ability to create [their own] virtual worlds of diversity and inclusion”. Through these means, the artists are taking this format beyond pure entertainment value to probe social, political, and aesthetic questions. While video games have been the topic of numerous exhibitions in recent years, most of these highlighted their legitimacy as an artistic medium or focused on aspects of “game art”.

WORLDBUILDING is the first transgenerational, multinational show of this scope to examine how contemporary artists are appropriating the aesthetics and technology of gaming as their chosen form of expression. In so doing, this exhibit presents a plurality of voices and a multitude of perspectives.

Additionally, in a *Free Tech Store*, an artwork by **Jonathan Horowitz**, visitors can bring in technological merchandise that they no longer want such as gadgets, computers, hardware, and software and trade them in for technological objects that they do want. Similar to alternative modes of exchange in the digital realm, this work will offer a physical place to give-and-take with no monetary transactions. Moreover, it will find new homes for electronics which quickly become obsolete, often ending up in landfills. WORLDBUILDING will also include an online component where visitors can watch and interact with artworks from their homes or on their phones by scanning a QR code in the exhibition space.

While fun and light-hearted on the surface, this show will take on some of the most pressing issues today. Contrary to the discriminatory plotlines and stereotypical depictions in mainstream games, these projects will propose counter-narratives and alternative gameplay.

Several pieces will present virtual ecosystems which re-imagine humanity's destructive relationship with nature, thereby cultivating alternative ecologies. Exploring uncharted futures, these digital environments anticipate a more bio-diverse planet post-homo-sapiens and speculate on new cross-species hybrids. Other works mine history to resurrect and make heard the erased voices of the past. Certain video games and videos pursue fantasies about what if other paths had been taken, exploring what it feels like to live outside of a marginalized body and creating visions of worlds unchained from colonialism and enslavement. Giving us the chance to replay the game so to speak, these scenarios foster empathy and reverse the violence that pervades both the game world and society at large.

Indeed, for many artists in WORLDBUILDING, the digital provides a path beyond the confines of the given. Take, for instance, artists that have designed avatars to transcend categories such as nationality, gender, age, and sexuality. Here and throughout the exhibition, the boundary between the real and the artificial, the material and the virtual will begin to collapse. Through their interactions with the players, several simulated landscapes and characters will develop the capacity to evolve and make their own decisions, evoking the possibility of silicon-based intelligent life forms. Such projects do not reflect on life as we know it but rather open up to life as it could be. For as Hans Ulrich Obrist contends, video games enable artists to "create new worlds, not just inherit and live within existing ones".

Initiated by the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/Düsseldorf, WORLDBUILDING. Gaming and Art in the Digital Age was adapted by the Centre Pompidou-Metz. Obrist originally curated this exhibit in 2022 to celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the "Julia Stoschek Collection" in Düsseldorf, one of the world's most comprehensive private collections with a focus on "time-based art".

Considered as one of the most influential curators in the world, Hans Ulrich Obrist sets up, in his unique curatorial approach, a dialogue between the visual arts and diverse fields such as video games.

WORLDBUILDING. Gaming and Art in the Digital Age will run at the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Düsseldorf, until December 10th, 2023.

THE FREE TECH STORE

In this artwork, *Free Tech Store* by Jonathan Horowitz, visitors are invited to leave tech items such as hardware, software, and games within the designated space of the store and take whatever item they would like for free.



Theo Triantafyllidis, *Pastoral*, 2019, video game installation, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the artist and The Breeder Gallery, Athens

METZ SEMI-MARATHON

Hosted by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Chiara Parisi

FRIDAY, JUNE 9, 2023

From 22:00

CENTRE POMPIDOU-METZ

Since 2006, Hans Ulrich Obrist, curator of the exhibition WORLDBUILDING. Gaming and Art in the Digital Age and Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries in London, has regularly organized his now famous "marathons".

On the occasion of the opening of WORLDBUILDING, Hans Ulrich Obrist and Chiara Parisi, director of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, will host a semi-marathon of conversations, games, performances and round tables on the topic of video games. Throughout the evening, artists, theorists and gamers will discuss video games and themes of the exhibition such as cyber-feminism, decolonial thinking, alternative gameplay, non-anthropocentrism, and above all, poetry and art.



NEW! THE CENTRE POMPIDOU-METZ'S PODCAST

Et si je te raconte... is the Centre Pompidou-Metz's new podcast that invites the listener behind the scenes of our major exhibitions. The floor is given to curators, production managers, catalogue editors, communication managers, production designers... They allow you to discover art as you have never heard it before.

See you behind the scenes of WORLDBUILDING with Hans Ulrich Obrist.

Directed by Jeanne Dreyfus Daboussy

Duration: 20'

Available on: centrepompidou-metz.fr, YouTube, Spotify, Apple Podcasts.

2.

HANS ULRICH OBRIST

Hans Ulrich Obrist (b. 1968, Zurich, Switzerland) is Artistic Director of the Serpentine Galleries in London, and Senior Advisor at LUMA Arles. Since his first show World Soup: The Kitchen Show in 1991 he has curated more than 350 exhibitions. Most notable amongst these are the Do It series (1993–), Take Me (I'm Yours) in London (1995), Paris (2015), New York (2016), and Milan (2017); and the Swiss Pavilion at the 14th International Architecture Biennale in Venice (2014). Obrist has also co-curated the Cities on The Move series (1996–2000), Laboratorium (1999); the operatic group exhibition Il Tempo del Postino in Manchester (2007) and Basel (2009), and the 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 Rooms series (2011–2015). Obrist's recent shows include IT'S URGENT at LUMA Arles (2019–2021), and Enzo Maria at the Triennale Milano (2020). The Handwriting Project, which protests the disappearance of handwriting in the digital age, has been taking place on Instagram since 2013 (@hansulrichobrist).

In 2011 Obrist received the CCS Bard Award for Curatorial Excellence, and in 2015 he was awarded the International Folkwang Prize. Most recently he was honoured by the Appraisers Association of America with the 2018 Award for Excellence in the Arts. Obrist has lectured internationally at academic and art institutions, and is contributing editor to several magazines and journals. Obrist's recent publications include *Ways of Curating* (2015), *The Age of Earthquakes* (2015), *Lives of the Artists, Lives of the Architects* (2015), *Mondialité* (2017), *Somewhere Totally Else* (2018), *The Athens Dialogues* (2018), *Maria Lassnig: Letters* (2020), *Entrevistas Brasileiras: Volume 2* (2020), *An Exhibition Always Hides Another Exhibition* (2019), *The Extreme Self: Age of You* (2021), and *140 Ideas for Planet Earth* (2021).

3.

THE JULIA STOSCHEK FOUNDATION

Founded in 2017, the Julia Stoschek Foundation is a non-profit arts and cultural organization dedicated to the exhibition, development, curation and study of new media. Through major exhibitions and discursive events in its two public exhibition spaces in Berlin and Düsseldorf, the Julia Stoschek Foundation presents innovative performance and new media practices. The Foundation also manages the Julia Stoschek Collection (founded in 2002), one of the most important private collections of new media.

With over 900 artworks dating from the 1960s to the present day and by 300 different artists, the collection encompasses a variety of media including video, film, single and multi-channel video installations, multimedia environments, performance, sound art and virtual reality works. Photography, sculpture and painting complete this focus on new media.

Accessibility and mediation are at the heart of the Julia Stoschek Foundation's mission. Artworks from the collection have been presented in solo and group exhibitions in Düsseldorf, Germany, since 2007. In 2016, a second exhibition space was opened in Berlin-Mitte. Both spaces offer an extensive public outreach program, including guided tours, performances, screenings, lectures, conversations with artists and workshops. Since 2019, 200 works from the collection have been made accessible online (Video Lounge). In addition, the Research Center offers visitors and researchers the opportunity to view the entire collection and access over 4,000 publications in a reference library focusing on new media.

The Julia Stoschek Foundation welcomes requests to lend artworks and contributes to exhibitions around the world. The foundation also invites artists and curators to develop projects and commissions. External collaborations with institutions in Germany and abroad also play a vital role. Past collaborations include Berliner Festspiele, Berlin; Deichtorhallen, Hamburg; Kunstsammlung NRW, Düsseldorf; Moderna Museet Malmö, Sweden; MoMA PS1, New York; Performa Biennial, New York; Serpentine Galleries, London; Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel; and ZKM | Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe.

The conservation and maintenance of new media is one of the Foundation's core concerns. In collaboration with artists and galleries, the in-house conservation department has developed and implemented a state-of-the-art long-term archiving strategy. To ensure long-term preservation and avoid generation loss (i.e. the gradual loss of resolution), works are regularly examined and updated, and if necessary migrated to our new media. This concerns both the data carriers and the data itself, hardware and software, as well as regular monitoring of data format obsolescence.

In 2019, the Curatorial & Research Residency Program (CRRP) was launched by the Julia Stoschek Foundation. This residency is for students in curatorial studies programs around the world and is by invitation only. Past collaborations include the Center for Curatorial Studies (Bard College, New York), and the curatorial studies program at Goethe University and Städelschule (Frankfurt am Main).

4.

FOCUS ON THE WORKS

PEGGY AHWESH

United States, 1954.
Lives and works in the United States

A pioneer in experimental film and video art, Peggy Ahwesh has worked with an impressive variety of moving image media since the 1980s. For *She Puppet*, she recorded herself while playing Tomb Raider and then edited the sequences to show the heroine, Lara Croft, dying and being reborn over and over, against a soundtrack of women's voices reading quotes from the musician Sun Ra, the poet Fernando Pessoa and the writer Joanna Russ. By rewriting this preprogrammed narrative, Peggy Ahwesh questions female subjectivity, the materiality of the body and the political potential of gaming.

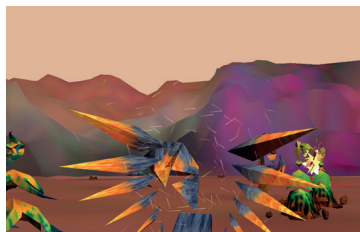


Peggy Ahwesh, *She Puppet*, 2001
Video, colour, sound, 15'
© Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/Düsseldorf; the artist; and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

REBECCA ALLEN

United States, 1953.
Lives and works in the United States

Rebecca Allen began working in digital art in the 1970s. For *The Bush Soul #3*, she developed some of the earliest AI software, which became the basis for a new style of digital art. This work was inspired by a West African belief that a person has multiple souls, including one that dwells within a wild animal of the bush. Here, the player explores a virtual world as their "bush soul" and the different creatures that it inhabits. This world is alive and responsive, populated by artificial life forms endowed with their own "feelings" that can change based on their interactions.

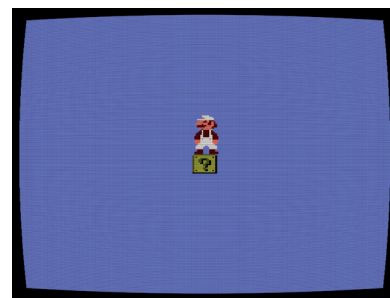


Rebecca Allen, *The Bush Soul #3*, 1999
Interactive installation, colour, sound
Interactive simulation, artificial life forms / artificial intelligences, infinite duration
© Courtesy of the artist; ZELDA, London; and the Zabłudowicz Collection, London

CORY ARCANGEL

United States, 1978. Lives and works in Norway

Cory Arcangel was one of the first hackers to enter the art world, creating *Totally Fucked* in his early days as an artist. For this piece, he modded (modified) a Super Mario Bros. cartridge to generate an infinite loop of Mario stuck on a cube. As in much of Arcangel's work, this doomed character expresses our frustration with technology's inability to meet our expectations.



Cory Arcangel, *Totally Fucked*, 2003
Handmade hacked Super Mario Bros. cartridge, Nintendo NES video game console, artist's software
© Courtesy of the artist
Photo: Cory Arcangel

ED ATKINS

United Kingdom, 1982. Lives and works in Denmark

Ed Atkins meticulously employs digital technologies (motion capture, animation, immersive sound design, etc.) in his videos. He is interested in the paradoxical capacity of a digital moving image to make subjects appear animated and hyper-realistic while stripping them of all life and substance. In *Even Pricks*, as in many of his other pieces, the human body plays a central role, especially the thumb, no doubt a reference to digital technology and today's "like" culture. The bodies of his avatars are so perfectly rendered that they can cause a sensation of uneasiness or even revulsion in viewers. Atkins questions the possibility of expressing deep feelings in the troubling world of inhuman code.



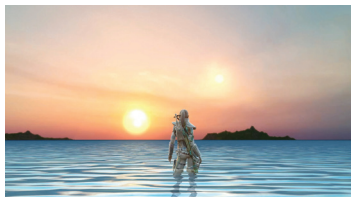
Ed Atkins, *Even Pricks*, 2013
16:10 HD video, colour, 5.1 surround sound, 8'
© Courtesy of the artist and the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/Düsseldorf

LATURBO AVEDON

Online, 1988. Lives and works online

LaTurbo Avedon is a non-binary avatar who works exclusively in virtual space and never appears in the physical world. Since 2008, they have been creating artworks that explore non-physical identity and authorship. *Permanent Sunset* is machinima, a film made using a video game engine. The artist recorded themselves admiring sunsets in various video games. Prolonging these rare peaceful moments that typically occur between action scenes, Avedon underscores the intensity of the virtual experience while challenging our definition of nature and reality.

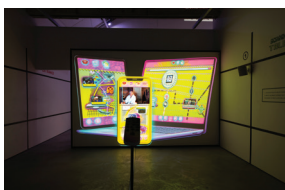
LaTurbo Avedon, *Permanent Sunset*,
2020-present
Video, colour, sound, 6'13"
© Courtesy of the artist



NEÏL BELOUFA & EBB

France, 1985. Lives and works in France

In 2014, Neïl Beloufa directed an oddly prescient mini-series: during a global pandemic, scientists race to find a vaccine while the world's population is forced into a lockdown, communicating only through screens. In 2020, when this fiction became reality with the onset of the COVID pandemic, Neïl Beloufa founded EBB, a decentralised organisation that specialises in Web3 cultural production technologies, through which he adapted his mini-series into an interactive online game. Here, he presents *Screen-Talk* in an immersive installation. Using a remote control, visitors can choose episodes of the mini-series to watch and can also play on arcade machines and win points by answering quiz questions using clues from the mini-series.



Neïl Beloufa & EBB, *Screen-Talk*, 2020
Interactive installation, mini-series, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the artists, Adagp, Paris, 2023

MERIEM BENNANI

Morocco, 1988. Lives and works in the United States

In 2016, when Donald Trump was targeting immigrants in the United States, Meriem Bennani, a Moroccan artist living in New York, began researching subatomic teleportation. This research inspired a series of videos about a fictional future island in the Atlantic Ocean called the CAPS, where migrants are detained after being intercepted mid-teleportation by the police. Interrupted teleportations lead to physiological bugs like pixelation: the inhabitants' bodies are constantly changing, which the artist considers to be a form of queerness. This video, which mixes live action sequences, digital special effects and found footage, tells the story of the bustling life of this refugee camp.

Meriem Bennani, *Party on the CAPS*, 2018
Video, colour, sound, 25'28"
© Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/
Düsseldorf; the artist; Biennale of Moving Images
(BIM) 2018; and C L E A R I N G,
New York/Brussels



DAVID BLANDY & LARRY ACHIAMPONG

David Blandy (United Kingdom, 1976)
& Larry Achiampong (United Kingdom, 1984).
Live and work in the United Kingdom

In 1951, cancer cells were extracted from Henrietta Lacks, a Black woman, without her knowledge or consent. Although she died that same year, her cells continue to reproduce and have yielded some crucial discoveries. *A Lament for Power* centers around these "HeLa" cells, as they are called. Constructed from scenes that the artists created in the Unity video game engine alongside sections appropriated from the problematic game *Resident Evil 5*, this piece uses virtual gaming space to give visibility to the complicated entanglement of science, politics and race in the discourse and narratives of our society.



David Blandy & Larry Achiampong,
A Lament for Power, 2020
HD video, colour, stereophonic sound, 13'16"
© Courtesy of the artists; Copperfield, London;
and Seventeen, London, Adagp, Paris, 2023

DANIELLE BRATHWAITE-SHIRLEY

United Kingdom, 1995.

Lives and works in the United Kingdom and Germany

Can a firearm be used to protect Black trans people without it being turned against us? This question is the main theme running through Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley's piece, *She Keeps Me Damn Alive*. Participants are invited to use a giant pink, kitschy gun to shoot down characters they see as a threat, based solely on their assumptions. The choice of people they shoot will determine whether their actions contribute to white supremacy or whether they help to protect the safety of Black transgender people. You will feel uncomfortable. You will make the wrong decisions. You will feel the weight of your choices. It's up to you what you do with those mistakes.



Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, *She Keeps Me Damn Alive*, 2021.
Video game installation, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the artist and ZELDA, London

IAN CHENG

United States, 1984.

Lives and works in the United States

For the past decade, Ian Cheng has been creating digital simulations that evolve on their own, in real time: The game learns to play itself. In this way, *BOB (or "Bag of Beliefs")* learns from its sensory experiences and even develops a personality over time, to the point that the artist has described it as "art that has a nervous system". Players can affect BOB's cognitive development via BOB Shrine, an iOS app they can use to make offerings like food and other stimuli. BOB then interacts and decides whether or not it trusts the person who made the offering. With this piece, Cheng speculates on the possibility of new forms of life.

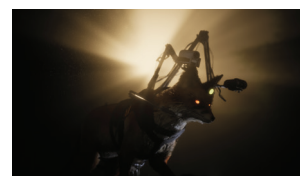


Ian Cheng, *BOB (Bag of Beliefs)*, 2018-2019
Artificial life form, colour, sound,
Infinite duration, Variable dimensions
Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/Düsseldorf;
the artist; Gladstone Gallery, Brussels/New York; and Pilar
Corrias, London © Ian Cheng

SARA DIBIZA

France, 1993. Lives and works in France

TVSF (The Very Scary Forest) is the film version of the first video game that Sara Dibiza created self-taught. Both the game and the film invite players/spectators to roam around a forest populated by hybrid creatures, zombies and witches. In this enchanted virtual world, a messianic fable full of symbolism tells the story of a father fox who frees zombies from their alienation. The game, which is available in single-player or multi-player mode, features seven levels with characters voiced by the artist's friends who also contributed 3D sculptures, songs and designs.

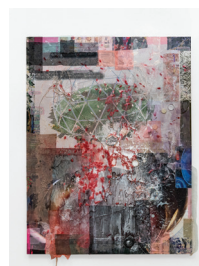


Sara Dibiza, *TVSF (The Very Scary Forest)*, 2021
Film, colour, sound, 22'50"
© Courtesy of the artist

MIMOSA ECHARD

France, 1986. Lives and works in France

Mimosa Echard asked three streamers to record themselves on Twitch (a live video streaming service) while playing *Sporal*, a video game designed by the artist. The theme of streaming is also present in the game itself, in which the player passes through the cavities of a fictional single-cell organism, exchanging (streaming) fluids with various characters. This "wet" game was inspired by myxomycetes, single-cell organisms that are capable of learning, remembering and transmitting information. By creating a link between video games, streaming and myxomycetes, this assemblage of works also connects nature and technology, the museum space and the gaming community. In this way, the work questions the nature of desire and memory in decentralised networks, whether they are organic or inorganic, living or non-living.



Mimosa Echard, *Sporal (dôme)*, 2023
Capsules, pearl necklace, fake flower pistils, elastic band, fake
nails, lotus pollen, makeup remover sponges, metal bracelet, plastic
bracelet, metal rings, sex toy, mirror, plastic snake, printed fabric,
fabric, lacquer, varnish and synthetic glue; 250 x 190 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris
© Mimosa Echard/ADAGP, Paris, 2023; Photo: Jiayun Deng –
Galerie Chantal Crousel

HARUN FAROCKI

Czechia, 1944 – Germany, 2014

Filmmaker Harun Farocki directed, wrote and produced more than 100 films over the course of his career which began in the 1960s. *Watson is Down* is the first in his *Serious Games* series, which shows how video games are used in US military recruitment, training and post-traumatic stress therapy. Through this work, he examines visual technology and the impact that images have in the military-entertainment complex (referring to the mutually beneficial cooperation between the military and the entertainment industry).

Harun Farocki, *Serious Games I: Watson is Down*, 2009-2010
Video, colour, sound, 8'
Courtesy of Harun Farocki
Filmproduction
© Harun Farocki GbR



CAO FEI

China, 1978. Lives and works in China

i.Mirror by China Tracy (AKA: Cao Fei) is the first video in a series of works that Cao Fei created in the virtual world, Second Life. This piece, which she sees as a virtual documentary, follows the (real) adventures of China Tracy, the artist's avatar, who embodies the young generation in China, a country that was becoming increasingly connected and globalised. In this video set to melancholic music, China Tracy explores the city and develops a romantic relationship with an avatar that, she later learns, is that of a 65-year-old American man. This work reveals the potential of the digital world, where the line between the virtual and reality is fuzzy and where identity is fluid, allowing players to become whoever they want.



Cao Fei,
i.Mirror by China Tracy (AKA: Cao Fei), 2007
Video, colour, sound, 28'
© Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/
Düsseldorf; the artist; and Vitamin Creative Space,
Guangzhou

ED FORNIELES

United Kingdom, 1983.

Lives and works in the United Kingdom

In 2016, Ed Fornieles created his first digital creatures, called *Finiliars*, whose emotions are connected to streams of real-time stock market data. He transformed the abstract code into a new species of adorable beings in the form of animated Tamagotchi-esque characters. In 2021, a sub-species of *Finiliars* was born, embodying various cryptocurrencies. These characters celebrate by guzzling champagne when prices are on the rise and become despondent when they drop. They can be purchased as NFTs, and buyers are encouraged to take good care of their "digital friends" to arouse empathy in the owners. Thus, *Finiliars* can affect the relationship between their owners and the global economy. You can interact with them on your smartphone by scanning the QR code displayed in the exhibition.

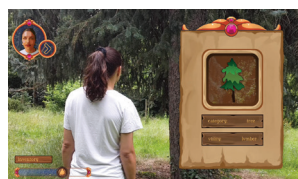
Ed Fornieles,
Fini advert, 2023
Interactive avatars
© Courtesy of the artist



SARAH FRIEND

Canada, 1988. Lives and works in Germany

Eve and the Interface is the first episode in a series of videos that look at game interfaces and the real world. Sarah Friend, a coder who is interested in blockchains, cryptocurrencies and alternative economies that aim for an equal distribution of wealth, set this story in a pluralistic monetary utopia. The protagonist, Eve, navigates the world with the help of The Interface, her smart PDA. We only see Eve from behind, as if she were an avatar in a video game. One day, Eve asks the Interface a question, but it doesn't answer, giving her the impression that she has stumbled upon a state secret. Suddenly aware that her world isn't as transparent as she thought, she begins to wonder about who holds the power in the metaverse and who is behind the game.



Sarah Friend, *Eve and the Interface*, 2021
Video, colour, sound, 6'12"
© Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nagel Draxler,
Cologne/Munich/Berlin

KIM HEECHEON

South Korea, 1989. Lives and works in South Korea

The video *Sleigh Ride Chill* mixes filmed and found footage with computer generated imagery, to represent the present-day human condition. Here we discover a world where digital technologies blur the boundaries between virtual space and physical space. Heecheon introduces three narrative threads, linked by recurring imagery of the racing game Gran Turismo 4 and people over whose faces the artist has placed his own using the Face Swap app. This piece demonstrates how social media, software, apps and digital interfaces construct our urban landscapes, our perception and our subjectivity.



Kim Heecheon, *Sleigh Ride Chill*, 2016
Single-channel video, colour, sound, 17'27"
© Courtesy of the artist

JONATHAN HOROWITZ

United States, 1966.
Lives and works in the United States

Jonathan Horowitz created his *Free Tech Store* especially for WORLDBUILDING in Metz. This piece invites visitors to leave tech items such as hardware, software, and games within the designated space of the store and take whatever item they would like for free. A material correlate to online sharing and alternative modes of exchange in the digital realm, this installation offers a place to give-and-take with no monetary transactions. It also provides an opportunity to give a new life to devices that quickly become obsolete and end up in landfills.



Jonathan Horowitz, *Free Tech Store*, 2023
Installation
Wall and floor graphic, shelves, changing donated items, Variable dimensions
© Courtesy of the artist
View of the installation *Free Store* at Take Me (I'm Yours), at the Monnaie de Paris, 2015

JODI

Netherlands, founded in 1995. Joan Heemskerk (Netherlands, 1968) & Dirk Paesmans (Belgium, 1965)

At the forefront of Web art in the 1990s, the artists from the JODI collective (Joan Heemskerk and Dirk Paesmans) were among the first to appropriate and subvert software and video games. This work is a good example of a "mod", a modification of an existing video game. JODI altered the software and the graphics of Quake, a first-person shooter game that was popular at the time. Through their digital interventions, the game's visuals have been reduced to black and white stripes that create a contrast with the soundtrack of the game which was left in tact and in accordance with the action. The disoriented player uses the controller to navigate this abstract landscape, trying to orient themselves by means of the sounds.

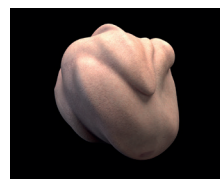


JODI, *Untitled-Game (CTRL-SPACE)*,
Modification of Video Game (*Quake 1*), 1998-2001
Video game installation, black and white, sound
© Courtesy of the artists

RINDON JOHNSON

United States, 1990.
Lives and works in the United States and Germany

May the moon meet us apart, may the sun meet us together was inspired by the intelligence of the octopus, which has a network of neurons spread throughout its tentacles that allows it to feel with its whole body. For this virtual reality experience, Johnson introduces us to imaginary deep sea creatures called Bists. These gelatinous, limbless animals absorb plastic in the ocean so that other beings may thrive. The floating viewer engages intimately with the bists and can even enter their bodies. This work encourages a tentacular practice of speculating on new sensory ways to interact with the non human world.



Rindon Johnson, *May the moon meet us apart, may the sun meet us together*, 2021
Virtual reality (game) installation, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/Düsseldorf; the artist; and Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles/New York

KAWS

(Brian Donnelly) United States, 1974.
Lives and works in the United States

For his first major solo exhibition in London, *NEW FICTION*, KAWS presented new and recent works in physical and augmented reality at the Serpentine Galleries from 18 January – 27 February 2022. The exhibition was presented in collaboration with Acute Art and curated by Acute’s Artistic Director, Daniel Birnbaum. A virtual recreation of the show launched simultaneously in Fortnite, allowing millions of players from all over the world to experience the exhibition from anywhere. All built by the Fortnite Creative community, players were able to explore the Serpentine’s grounds and experience KAWS’ artworks and his iconic sculptures in a completely new way.

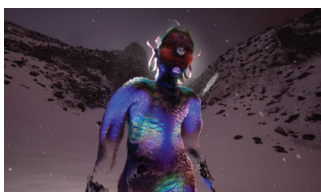


KAWS, *NEW FICTION*, 2022
Video, colour, sound, 1’20”
© Courtesy of the artist and Fortnite

KEIKEN

United Kingdom, founded in 2015.
Live and work in the United Kingdom and Germany

Experience (*keiken* in Japanese) and embodiment, in our increasingly immaterial world is central to this collective’s practice, which invents new ways for viewers to immerse themselves in the artists’ games and films through a number of technological innovations. For this work, the artists developed a film from their game, *Morphogenic Angels*. The film, which was created using the cutting-edge game engine Unreal 5, takes place in the future 1,000 years from now. A post-human species called “morphic angels” update their bodies by merging their cells with the cells of plants and extraterrestrials, bringing them closer to non-human consciousnesses.



Keiken, *Morphogenic Angels*, 2023
Film in two parts, 45’
© Courtesy of the artists, Adagp, Paris, 2023

KOO JEONG A

South Korea, 1967. Lives and works everywhere

Koo Jeong A’s 3D animation *CHAMNAWANA (True me & i)* plunges us into an inventive digital reality inhabited by ethereal creatures. These enormous, strange (half human, half animal) characters covered with black spots, evoke Malevich’s Suprematism and Mantegna’s *Lamentation of Christ*, as they morph, embrace and sometimes meld together like the fusion and fission of mitochondria. In a state of perpetual becoming, they embody the creative potential of the digital realm to generate new forms. Koo Jeong A also designed the *CINE HORIZONE* sign for the movie theater in the exhibition. This sign was inspired by an event horizon, a point of no return, the limit beyond which it is impossible to see, or know what is happening.

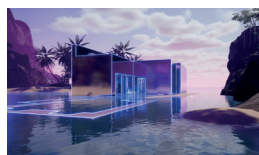


Koo Jeong A, *CHAMNAWANA (True me & i)*, 2017
Animation, black and white, no sound, 3’
© Courtesy of the artist

LAWRENCE LEK

Germany, 1982. Lives and works in the United Kingdom

Nepenthe Zone takes its name from a fictional potion that helps people forget their pain. The game presents an open world where players are able to wander freely. Influenced by the travel essays written by the Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō and by the deserted extraterrestrial city in the novel *The Orchid Cage* by Herbert W. Franke, a science fiction author and pioneer of digital art, the game takes place on a mysterious, imaginary tropical island. Lek is also interested in the cognitive effects of artificial memory in the digital age, especially the “doorway effect”, a psychological phenomenon that occurs when someone forgets what they meant to do as soon as they walk into a room. Similarly, the artist hopes that, by entering this virtual zone, players will forget the woes of their daily lives.



Lawrence Lek, *Nepenthe Zone*, 2022
Video game installation, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the artist and Sadie Coles, London

LUYANG

Lives and works in China

LuYang explores digital reincarnation and uses avatars to transcend the limits of the physical body, gender, age, sexuality and nationality. Their pieces in this exhibition adopt a Buddhist approach to encourage viewers to leave their egos behind and reveal the fleetingness of all people and things. In *The Great Adventure of Material World*, the participant plays the role of the Material World Knight, a gender-fluid protagonist who fights the oppression of binary systems. Moving up to levels of higher consciousness, the hero gradually begins to understand that the material world and the idea of a fixed self are nothing more than illusions.



LuYang, *The Great Adventure of Material World*, 2019-2020
Video game installation, colour, sound
HD video, colour, sound, 26'22"
© Courtesy of the artist and Soci t , Berlin

GABRIEL MASSAN

Brazil, 1996. Lives and works in Germany

Through video games, NFTs, virtual reality and 3D animation, Gabriel Massan reimagines our notion of the third world. His video, *Third World: The Bottom Dimension – Concept For Title Screens*, features a captivating digital landscape. It is the title sequence for a video game that the artist is in the process of developing. Game will attempt to subvert power imbalances and the exploitation of the environment within colonialist structures to make players aware of the Black-Indigenous Latin American experience.



Gabriel Massan, *Third World: The Bottom Dimension – Concept For Title Screens*, 2022
Digital sculpture and 3D animation, colour,
no sound, 1'30"
© Courtesy of the artist

SONDRA PERRY

United States, 1986.

Lives and works in the United States

Sandra Perry, the artist's twin brother, played basketball at the highest level of university sports (Division I). The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) sold the likenesses, personal information and statistics of all the players on his team, without their knowledge to a sports video game developer which then created a game with the avatars of the entire team. The players sued and lost their lawsuit without any compensation. Setting this video game against African artifacts in western museums, the artist reveals new forms of digital colonisation.



Sandra Perry, *IT'S IN THE GAME '17*, 2017
Video, colour, sound, 16'20"
© Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/
D sseldorf; the artist; Bridget Donahue, New York; and
Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

DOMINIQUE GONZALEZ-FOERSTER

France, 1965. Lives and works in Brazil and France.



Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster,
Ann Lee in Anzen Zone, 2000
Video, colour, sound, 3'25"
© Courtesy of the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven
Adagp, Paris, 2023

PHILIPPE PARRENO

1964. Lives and works in France.



Philippe Parreno,
Anywhere Out of the World, 2000
Video, colour, sound, 4'
© Courtesy of the artist

PIERRE HUYGHE

France, 1962. Lives and works in the United States and Chile.



Pierre Huyghe, *Two Minutes Out of Time*, 2000
Animated film, colour, sound, 4'
© Courtesy of the artist, Adagp, Paris, 2023

M/M (Paris)

France, founded in 1992.
Michael Amzalag, 1968, France;
Mathias Augustyniak, 1967, France.
Live and work in France.



M/M (Paris)
No Ghost Just A Shell
(Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno), 2000
[Art Poster 02]
Industrial silkscreen print, 3 colours
Approx. 120 × 176 cm, edition not specified
© Courtesy of Air de Paris, Paris © M/M (Paris)

NO GHOST JUST A SHELL

In a new form of collaboration, Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno bought the rights to a manga character in 1999 that they named Annlee.

In 2000, M/M (Paris) came up with the slogan *No Ghost Just A Shell* for a poster which included a photocopy of the very first depiction of Annlee. This poster would become the symbol of the project. The poster announced the first two episodes, respectively directed by Huyghe and Parreno, which were 3D animations of Annlee recounting the circumstances of her "adoption" by the artists and talking about her status as an image.

Huyghe and Parreno then shared Annlee with many artist friends giving each one the chance to produce a work using her, that would then serve as a catalyst for the next artist's piece.

In the third episode, directed by Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, a gender-neutral Annlee speaks Japanese until they meet their lookalike who continues the monologue in English. And so, between 2000 and 2002, 18 artists created 28 pieces (films, sculptures, installations, signs, etc.) that brought Annlee to life.

For screenings of the films in galleries or museums, M/M (Paris) conceived a series of wallpaper posters packed with signs, that would serve as the background for the presentation of the original poster and subsequent posters introducing the next episodes.

In 2002, Huyghe and Parreno gave their rights back to Annlee. This was the first time that an image became legally responsible for its own reproduction rights. Questioning a fictional image's capacity to become a legal person and connect a whole network of people around her, *No Ghost Just A Shell* has left a mark on the history of art.

CAROLINE POGGI & JONATHAN VINEL

Caroline Poggi, 1990, France; Jonathan Vinel, 1988, France. Live and work in France

Caroline Poggi and Jonathan Vinel draw their inspiration from the aesthetics and the universe of "open world" video games that players can explore without a mission or a quest. In *Bébé Colère* (Baby Anger), a 3D animated baby wanders through a filmed world. Confronted with modern subjectivity and outraged by the world around him, the baby gives an existentialist monologue. His depressing thoughts are saturated with the despair generated by COVID in 2020.

Caroline Poggi & Jonathan Vinel
Bébé Colère, 2020
Video, colour, sound, 13'29"
© Courtesy of the artists



SARA SADIK

France, 1994. Lives and works in France

Crystal Zastruga is part of a series of videos about Xenon Palace, an imaginary hookah lounge where creatures known as Xenons emerge from the smoke. This film follows the life-altering journey of Zetrei, a solitary man, on his quest for memories through the snowy, suspended landscapes of a parallel world. Through his thoughts and feelings, Sara Sadik explores the mechanisms of human affirmation, identity and memory.



Sara Sadik, *Crystal Zastruga*, 2023
Video, colour, sound, 12'19"
© Courtesy of the artist and Crèvecoeur, Paris

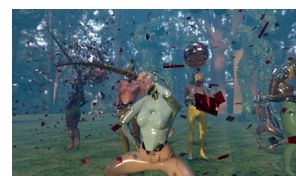
JACOLBY SATTERWHITE

United States, 1986.

Lives and works in the United States

This fantastical universe draws from references as diverse as video games from the 1990s to the early 2000s, Afrofuturism, non-Western rituals, queer theory, Renaissance painting and, above all, the artwork of Patricia Satterwhite, the artist's late mother. Jacolby Satterwhite used his own dance steps to animate Black female androids, sexy androgynous humanoids and other virtual hybrids that dance to the electronic rhythm of songs sung by Patricia Satterwhite and remixed by the artist. In this utopian virtual space, bodies that are usually marginalised are finally free to move.

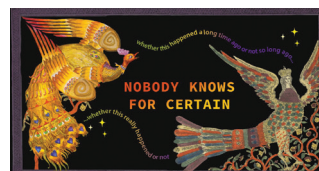
Jacolby Satterwhite, *We Are in Hell When We Hurt Each Other*, 2020
HD video and 3D animation, colour, sound, 24'22"
Courtesy of the artist and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York
© Jacolby Satterwhite



AFRAH SHAFIQ

India, 1989. Lives and works in India

A postcard designed by Afrah Shafiq gives visitors a souvenir that they can take with them and that will take them on a journey to a virtual world from their own homes. On the back of each card is a link to *Nobody Knows For Certain*, an interactive story created by the artist and inspired by children's books that were popular in India during the Soviet era. Mixing documentary with fantasy, this tale takes us back-and-forth between the USSR and India during the second half of the 20th century, exploring how stories carry forward, morph and change the world in ways that nobody knows for certain.



Afrah Shafiq, *Nobody Knows for Certain*, 2023
Postcards with a link to the interactive story
Nobody Knows For Certain by Afrah Shafiq
© Courtesy of the artist

JAKOB KUDSK STEENSEN

Denmark, 1987. Lives and works in Germany

This virtual reality (VR) experience sets up an encounter with the Kauai Moho, an extinct bird species. The work is a response to the mating call of this bird that was recorded in 1975 (now available on YouTube), in which the male sings to a female who never responds. For this project, the artist made 3D scans of flora and fauna, that he then programmed to colonise his recreation of the Moho's habitat. The scenery develops in reaction to the participant's breath and voice, captured by a microphone in the VR headset, and to the self-generating algorithmic music composed by the director of the Philip Glass Ensemble.



Jakob Kudsk Steensen, *RE-ANIMATED*, 2018-2019
Virtual reality installation, colour, sound, 18'
© Courtesy of the artist

STURTEVANT

United States, 1924 – France, 2014

In the 1960s, Sturtevant began reproducing artwork by her contemporaries to question authenticity and originality. For *Pacman*, she took her source material from the iconic game, more than 30 years after it was first released. This video is a digital copy, a non-interactive replay of the game *Pac-Man*, where we see the famous main character hunting down and eating "power pellets" and trying to avoid the ghosts in the maze. Spectators who are familiar with the game will want to intervene but will always walk away frustrated, because this version of *Pac-Man* ends with "Game Over". In the credits, *Pac-Man* turns against his pseudo-creator and gobbles up Sturtevant's name.



Sturtevant, *Pacman*, 2012
Video, colour, sound, 1'15"
Courtesy of the Julia Stoschek Foundation, Berlin/
Düsseldorf; Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac, London/Paris/
Salzburg/Seoul
© Sturtevant Estate, Paris

THE INSTITUTE OF QUEER ECOLOGY

United States, founded in 2017.
Live and work in the United States

The Institute of Queer Ecology is a collaborative organism that searches for alternative solutions to the environmental crisis. *H.O.R.I.Z.O.N.* invites players to take part in a society on a fictional remote island inspired by utopian communes like Lavender Hill (a queer commune founded in Ithaca, New York, in 1973). Thanks to a data bank and open access to the internet, players create and consume content, actively participating in building this world. For example, participants can chat about the plantlife and wildlife in the forest or share recipes in the kitchen. This multi-player game (which you can download at home) imagines a digital utopia that is non-hierarchical, collaborative and non-anthropocentric.



The Institute of Queer Ecology,
*H.O.R.I.Z.O.N. (Habitat One: Regenerative
Interconnected Zone of Nurture)*, 2021
Video game installation, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the artists

TRANSMODERNA

Germany, founded in 2018.
Live and work in Germany and Portugal

This collective works at the intersection of electronic music and digital art. *Terraforming CIR* takes participants on a vertiginous virtual reality voyage to a future extraterrestrial planet. Technological artifacts suggest that humans once tried to make "terraform" this planet, i.e. make it similar to Earth. On the ruins of these failed human colonies, post-homo sapiens societies thrive. With this work, Transmoderna shows that the notion of worldbuilding extends beyond the human race.

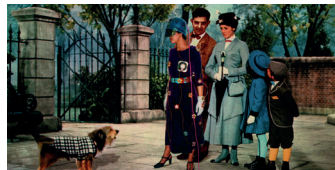


Transmoderna, *Terraforming CIR*, 2022
Virtual reality installation, colour, sound, 8'
In collaboration with Sofia Crespo, Feileacan
McCormick, Moisés Horta, Alan Ixba
and Gabriel Massan
© Courtesy of the artists

SUZANNE TREISTER

United Kingdom, 1958.
Lives and works in the United Kingdom

As one of the first female programmers, Suzanne Treister has been working with video games since the 1980s. With *No Other Symptoms – Time Travelling with Rosalind Brodsky*, her interactive, multimedia CD-ROM project, users explore the life of Rosalind Brodsky, the artist's delusional alter ego. In her adventures, Rosalind Brodsky visits Paris in the '60s, is present for the Russian Revolution of 1917 and undergoes psychoanalysis with Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud. She tries to save her grandparents from the Shoah and instead finds herself on the film set of *Schindler's List*. During these hallucinatory trips, the border between fiction and reality becomes more and more unclear.

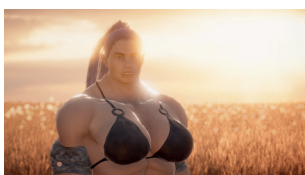


Suzanne Treister, *No Other Symptoms – Time Travelling with Rosalind Brodsky*, 1995-1999
CD-ROM video game installation
© Courtesy of the artist; Annely Juda Fine Art, London; and P-P-O-W Gallery, New York

THEO TRIANTAFYLLIDIS

Greece, 1988. Lives and works in the United States

Theo Triantafyllidis explores the fine line between the virtual world and the real world, as well as the roles of the bodies that occupy them. Unlike most popular video games, *Pastoral* is devoid of action. The protagonist, the artist's avatar which he created by virtually pushing its physical attributes to the extreme, is a non-binary, queer Ork. Embodying this bizarre character, the players meander around the idyllic natural setting of a sunny meadow, with no other goal than giving free rein to their imagination. Players are able to enjoy the peace and tranquillity that is unusual in gaming, watching the Ork and encountering a goat playing a lute which only intensifies the incongruity of the atmosphere.

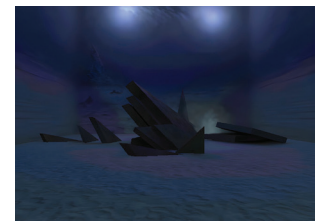


Theo Triantafyllidis, *Pastoral*, 2019
Video game installation, colour, sound
© Courtesy of the artist and The Breeder Gallery, Athens

BEN VICKERS

Lives and works in the United Kingdom

In one of the first examples of an open game engine, this work is the fourth in a series of 13 studies. Here, we have a digital simulation based on the painting *The Sea of Ice* (1824), which is considered to be a masterpiece by the German Romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich. The painting, which depicts a shipwreck on a frozen sea, is often described as a representation of the supremacy of nature over humankind.



Ben Vickers, *World Study #4: Sea of Ice*, 2006
Simulation

ANGELA WASHKO

United States, 1986.
Lives and works in the United States

In response to the misogyny to which she was subjected during online gaming, Angela Washko decided to intervene in *World of Warcraft*, the most popular multi-player online game of all time. Instead of slaying foes, venturing into dungeons and upgrading her gear, the artist decided to chat with other players about the sexism, the racism and any other forms of discrimination that they may have endured. Creating a safe space within the game space, Washko developed lengthy dialogues which she documented in this series of works. *Nature* is a recording of one of her interventions.



Angela Washko, *Nature (The Council on Gender Sensitivity and Behavioral Awareness in World of Warcraft)*, 2013
Video, colour, sound, 6'21"
© Courtesy of the artist

5.

SPECIAL PUBLICATION

CONNAISSANCE DES ARTS SPECIAL ISSUE

Connaissance des Arts is publishing a 68-page special issue on WORLDBUILDING. Gaming and Art in the Digital Age at the Centre Pompidou-Metz. This issue opens with a conversation between Hans Ulrich Obrist and Chiara Parisi. Zoe Stillpass takes the readers on a tour of the exhibition by presenting all of the works in the show. This issue also features an essay by Hans Ulrich Obrist contextualising the show and essays by video game and art specialists Isabelle Arvers, Mehdi Derfoufi and Fabien Siouffi. These essays delve into the history of this new medium and explore the themes that run through the exhibit. Finally, readers can scan three QR codes to discover artworks by Neil Beloufa, Sara Dibiza and Afrah Shafiq.

Price: 12,90 €



6. PARTNERS

The Centre Pompidou-Metz was the first example of the decentralisation of a great national cultural institution, the Centre Pompidou, in partnership with local authorities. An autonomous institution, the Centre Pompidou-Metz benefits from the experience, expertise and international renown of the Centre Pompidou. It shares with its counterparts the values of innovation, generosity, interdisciplinarity and openness to people from all backgrounds.

The Centre Pompidou-Metz organises temporary exhibitions based on loans from the collection of the Centre Pompidou, Musée National d'Art Moderne, which, with more than 120,000 works, is the biggest collection of modern and contemporary art in Europe and the second largest in the world.

It also develops partnerships with museums all over the world. To supplement its exhibitions, the Centre Pompidou-Metz organises dance performances, concerts, film screenings and talks.

It is supported by Wendel, its founding partner.

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WORLDBUILDING. GAMING AND ART IN THE DIGITAL AGE

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The Association des Amis du Centre Pompidou-Metz aims to contribute to the influence of the Centre Pompidou-Metz, notably by supporting its programming.

It supports the institution in its projects and encourages innovations in the field of education and transmission. Thus, for the year 2023, the Association has chosen to sponsor the WORLDBUILDING exhibition (June 10th, 2023 to January 15th, 2024)

By becoming a Friend, everyone can live and share a real cultural adventure, and make the museum's actions known in the Eurometropolis of Metz, on the scale of the Grand Est region and neighbouring countries.

Annual membership entitles you to unlimited access to exhibitions at the Centre Pompidou-Metz, invitations to previews of openings and guided tours, discounts on boutique products, VIP passes for European fairs and biennials, and access to the Friends travel program, VIP passes for European fairs and biennials and access to the Friends' travel program.

CONTACT

amis@centrepompidou-metz.fr
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7.

AVAILABLE VISUALS

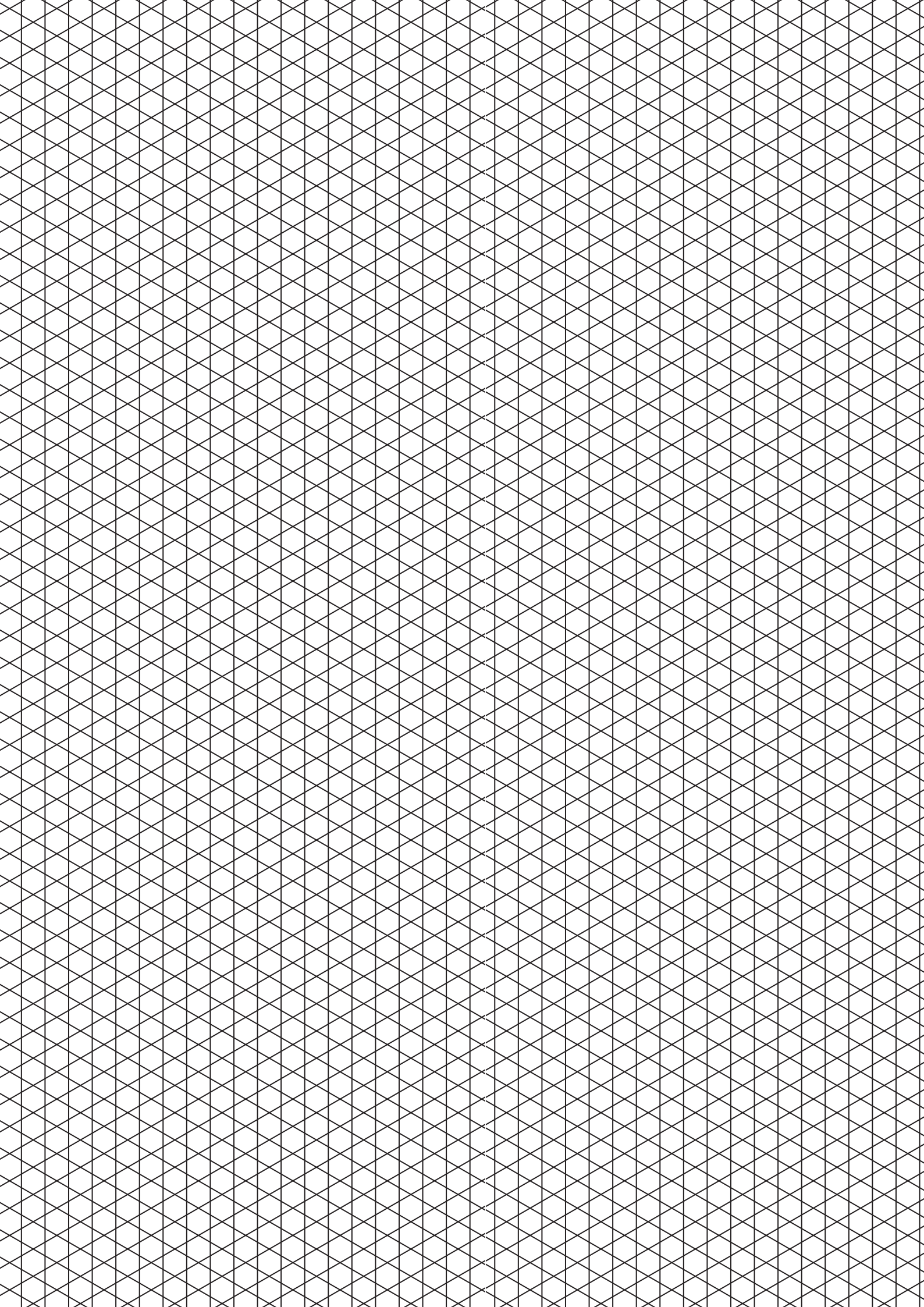
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OPENING TIMES

Daily, except Tuesdays and 1 May

01.04 > 31.10

MON. / WED. / THU.: 10AM – 6PM

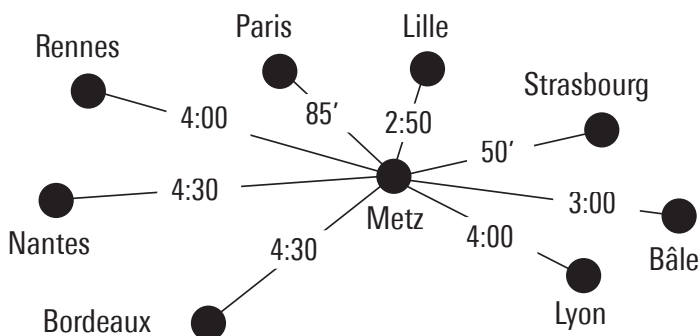
FRI. / SAT. / SUN.: 10AM – 7PM

01.11 > 31.03

MON. / WED. / THU. / FRI. / SAT. / SUN.: 10AM – 6PM

GETTING THERE

The shortest journey times by rail



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