



TRANSFORMATION MARATHON

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SERPENTINE
GALLERIES

Before 12am

Steven Warwick (Heatsick)
Heatsick: Exclusive mix of new works

Bill Kouligas
Devoid

12—3am

Samson Kambalu in conversation with **Hans Ulrich Obrist**

Rosi Braidotti
Language Is a Virus

Katherine Angel and Helen Hester
Technosexuals

Ayşe Gül Altınay with **Nil Mutluer** and **Yıldız Tar**
Feminist and Queer Transformations of Politics, War and Peace in Turkey

Elysia Crampton
March 5th Facebook Post

Jumana Manna
A Magical Substance by Night

Jaakko Pallasvuo and **Roy Boswell**
The Hunchback of South Bermondsey

William Pope.L
Klingon Talk (Attempt Two): The Colony

3—6am

Deep Lab
Erasing Borders

Nick Bostrom
Reading from *Superintelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*

Lynn Hershman Leeson
Selected Excerpts from *The Infinity Engine*

Haunted Machines
Alchemy

Jude Crilly
Calais Bounce

CAConrad with **Mica Sigourney**
Magenta Capstone of Apex Poetry Interviews
CAConrad

6—9am

Alexandra Kleeman and **Rachel Rose** in conversation with **Hans Ulrich Obrist**

William Pope.L
Klingon Talk (Attempt Two): The Colony

Federico Campagna with **Peter Adamson**, **Charles Hope** and **Anthony Arthur Long**
Neo Antiquity: Transformations of Philosophy and Poetry

Lucy Mercer with **Liz Berry**, **Ken Cockburn**, **Francine Elena**, **Alec Finlay**, **Harry Gilonis**, **Declan Ryan** and **Mark Waldron**
Neo Antiquity: Transformations of Philosophy and Poetry

Helen Benigson
Cashino Desert

Aram Saroyan with **John Densmore**
Sawing the Wood

Patrick Mudekereza

9am—1pm

Disobedient films with **Jamie Perera**
Climate Symphony

Jalal Toufic
An Outstanding —and Still Crazy— Task: Transforming Ourselves into Gods

Julieta Aranda
Data: Synthetic Recollections of Things That Never Happened

Julia Tcharfas and **Holly White**
Interspecies Communication

Sophia Al-Maria and **Maurice Louca**

Time Is Away
Neither Created nor Destroyed

Judy Chicago in conversation with **Hans Ulrich Obrist**

Candice Lin
To Recognise Oneself as Parasite

Koki Tanaka
Sound of Democracy (Field Recording/September 14, 2015/Tokyo)

Throughout

Tim Etchells
Time Piece / Interstitials

Samson Kambalu
Why I Am So Clever

Gil Leung and **Rebecca Lewin**
Commentary

Lorenzo Senni

Nomadic Moves and Waves of Change

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Rosi Braidotti

These are strange times, and strange things are happening. Times of ever-expanding yet spasmodic waves of change which engender the simultaneous occurrence of contradictory effects. Times of fast-moving changes which do not wipe out the brutality of power relations, but in many ways intensify them and bring them to the point of implosion. Living at such times of fast change may be exhilarating, yet the task of thinking critically about these changes and representing them adequately in order to engage productively with the contradictions, paradoxes and injustices they engender is a perennial challenge. How to account for fast-changing conditions is hard work; how to escape the velocity of change is even harder. Unless one likes complexity, one cannot feel at home in the twenty-first century. Transformations, metamorphoses, mutations and processes of change have in fact become familiar in the lives of most contemporary subjects. They are also vital concerns, however, for the scientific, social, cultural and political institutions that are expected to manage them.

Amidst accelerating and convulsive change, many traditional points of reference and age-old habits are being re-composed, albeit in contradictory ways. At such a time, more conceptual creativity is necessary and more discursive

imagination is needed to fuel the conceptual leaps across inertia, nostalgia, aporia and other forms of critical stasis induced by our historical condition. Solidarity and a sense of global justice require adequate theoretical backing. 'We' need to learn to think differently about the kind of subjects we have already become and the processes of deep-seated transformation we are undergoing.

If the only constant in the third millennium is change, then the challenge lies in how to think about processes, rather than concepts. We need to embrace complexity as a core value in both theoretical and cultural practice. This has implications that fly in the face of established academic conventions. In spite of multiple sustained efforts by theorists and practitioners alike, the mental habits of linearity and objectivity persist in their hegemonic hold over our thinking. It feels more familiar to think conceptually rather than in terms of processes and fluid flows of data. The vital force of ideas therefore tends to get frozen into fixed and substantive modes of thought: sedentary, identity-bound and self-replicating. Inward-looking thinking breeds negativity and paranoia. Surely the point is not to persevere in who we are, but rather to cultivate what we are capable of and willing to become: the task ahead is how to

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adequately express mutations and changes. This is however infinitely more pleasurable for those who are committed to engendering and enjoying transformations, than for those who can only experience them as a source of anxiety.

As nomadic subjects, we need neo-materialistic cartographies of situated—i.e. embedded and embodied—relational and affective subject positions. A cartography as a theoretically-based and politically-informed reading of the present, accounts for both spatial (socio-ecological) and temporal (genealogical) locations. A cartographic gesture sustains ethically accountable and politically empowering figurations of the transversal subject-assemblies or hybrid mixes we are in the process of becoming. Figurations render decentred and multi-layered visions of the subject as a dynamic and changing entity. The truth of the matter is always interstitial: it takes place in-between nature/technology; male/female; black/white; human/nonhuman in the spaces that flow and connect. We live in the midst of permanent processes of transition, hybridisation and nomadisation and these in-between states defy the established modes of theoretical representation. The question of style is therefore crucial to processes of transformation: we need to reconfigure the subject in

an intensive and affirmative mode, as transformers of intellectual energy and processors of the 'insights' that we are exchanging. These 'in'-sights are not to be thought of as plunging us inwards, towards a mythical 'inner' reservoir of truth. On the contrary, they are better thought of in the neo-materialist mode as propelling us along the multiple directions of extra-textual experiences. Thinking is living at a higher degree, a faster pace, a multi-directional manner; a worldly and immanent praxis.

This cartographic approach allows us to think of power relations simultaneously as the most 'external', collective, social phenomenon and also as the most intimate or 'internal' one. Or rather, power is the process that flows incessantly in-between the most 'internal' and the most 'external' forces. As Foucault taught us, power is a situation, a position, not an object or an essence. Subjectivity is the effect of the constant flows or in-between inter-connections that do not stop on the surface of issues of identity and power, but rather tackle their entanglement with issues of entitlement and power. Consequently, the task of developing adequate new figurations is relational, not individual. It needs to be the object of a collective discussion and public debates, as it cannot be determined by a single

individual. Such critical, discursive exchanges are at the heart of critical theory today.

The quest for alternative figurations to express the kind of internally contradictory multifaceted subjects that we have become is urgent because of our historical context. There is a noticeable gap between how we live in emancipated or post-feminist, multi-ethnic societies, with high technologies and telecommunication, and allegedly free borders that are in fact more and more militarised and controlled—to name just a few of our historical contradictions—and how we represent to ourselves this lived familiarity. This imaginative poverty can be read as a defensive reaction against the internal contradictions and schizophrenic ruptures characteristic of our era. Filling in this gap with adequate figurations is the great challenge of the present. Political figurations may be more effective to engender solidarity and resistance, here and now, than theoretical systems.

A figuration is a living map, a transformative account of the self—it's no metaphor. Being nomadic, homeless, a migrant, an exile, a refugee, a Bosnian rape-in-war victim, an itinerant worker, an unregistered immigrant; these are not metaphors. These are highly specific geopolitical and

historical locations—it's history tattooed on your body. One may be empowered or beautified by it, but most people are not; some just die of it. Figurations attempt to draw a cartography of the power-relations that define these respective positions. They don't embellish or metaphorise; they just express different socioeconomic and symbolic locations. They draw a cartographic map of power-relations and thus can also help identify possible sites and strategies of resistance.

The feminist politics of locations is a form of radical immanence that produces affirmative figurations of subjects-in-process. It allows us to trace an accountable and yet flexible route across the inner contradictions of our days. Feminists think through the body, not in a flight away from it. This in turn implies confronting boundaries and limitations. Critical theory in the feminist mode unfolds along zigzagging nomadic tracks supported by concepts such as embodiment and embeddedness, immanence, sexual difference, rhizomatics, affirmation, endurance or sustainability. Thinking about the body as a naturecultural continuum is a generative form of enfolded or embodied materialism. It allows us to link major external events and power relations to issues of sexual intimacy, desire and the imaginary. Embodied and embedded

feminist politics of location produce higher degrees of complexity in the analysis of power. These concerns have become all the more urgent today, in the era known as the Anthropocene, when climate change and other environmental issues are confronting us with the limits of anthropocentrism and of sustainable life on this planet. A distinct tendency is emerging today, for instance in United Nations humanitarianism and corporate humanism, to assuage this anxiety by proposing a reformulation of a panhuman 'we', who is supposed to be in *this* together. To hastily recompose a new generic 'we'—a new endangered humanity, as a unitary category of vulnerability just as it emerges as a threatened or endangered entity is at best a problematic move. I have serious doubts about the productive value of a panhuman bond forged by a reactive sort of cosmopolitanism that expresses intense anxiety about the future of our species.

The literature and the cultural production about extinction has taken the theme of transformation to a new height or depth of intensity. There is no question that the generic figure of the human—'we'—is in trouble and *this* is a serious matter. Many commentators seem struck by moral and cognitive panic at the prospect of the future of the human. But such urgency does not

warrant generic reconstructions of 'Humanity' and a tacit new consensus about something we may call 'the human'. I would argue for the need for more complex cartographies, to keep tracking the changing perceptions and multiple new formations of the 'human' in the globalised, technologically mediated and ethnically diverse world we inhabit.

The differential locations of different human peoples in the globalised world today prevent any generalisations about a global we. 'We'—the dwellers of *this* planet at this point in time—are confronted by a number of painful contradictions: an electronically linked pan-humanity which however is more fragmented than ever and split by cruel internal fractures, economic disparities, xenophobic fears and violence. Humanity is re-created as a negative category, held together by shared vulnerability and the spectre of extinction, but also struck down by environmental devastation, by new and old epidemics, in endless 'new' wars that innovate on ways of killing, in the proliferation of migrations and exodus, detention camps and refugees' centres. The staggering inequalities engendered by the global economy make for violence and insurrection; the appeals for new forms of cosmopolitan relations are often answered by necro-political

acts of violence, destruction and assassination, not only by the official enemies of the west—Muslim extremists—but also by home-grown killers who, in Europe, are the likes of Anders Behring Breivik.¹

In such a context, it is important to keep the critical perspective wide open and not give in to foregone conclusions about the transition the 'human'—and 'Humanity'—is going through. Transformations do not unfold in a linear and teleological manner, but rather in a circular and multi-directional manner.

We cannot allow for any foregone conclusions to short-circuit the generative potential of the process of transformation. What we need is careful negotiations in order to constitute new subject positions as transversal alliances among different humans and between human and non-human agents, accounting for the perpetuation of established hierarchical relations and processes of exclusion, as well as the ubiquity of technological mediation.

Instead of taking a flight into an abstract idea of a 'new' pan-humanity bonded in shared vulnerability or anxiety about survival and extinction, in a world risk society

I want to plea for affirmative politics grounded on immanent inter-connections in a transnational ethics of place. What we need is embedded and embodied, relational and affective cartographies of the new power relations that are emerging from the current geopolitical and post-anthropocentric world order. Class, race, gender and sexual orientations, age and able-bodiedness are more than ever significant markers of human 'normality'. They are key factors in framing the notion of and policing access to something we may call 'human' or 'humanity'. Yet, considering the global reach of the problems we are facing today in the era of the 'Anthropocene', it is nonetheless the case that 'We' are indeed in *this* anthropogenic crisis together. Such awareness must not however obscure or flatten out the power differentials that sustain the collective subject ('we') and its endeavor (*this*). 'We' need to acknowledge that transformation is not a unitary process and that there may well be multiple and potentially contradictory projects at stake in the complex re-compositions of 'the human' right now: many contested ways of becoming-world together.

¹ The Norwegian mass murderer and confessed perpetrator of the 2011 attacks in Oslo and on the island of Utoya, who killed respectively eight and 69 people, mostly Socialist youth.