

# reFiguring THE FUTURE

## *Refiguring the Future* Conference Curatorial Text

Lola Martinez and Maandeeq Mohamed

A platform for collective engagement, this two-day conference brings together an array of artists, educators, writers, and cultural strategists to envision a shared liberatory world-building politic. Tracing how science and technology have shaped the world around us, the conference brings forth critical perspectives that offer ways of living differently in relation to land, self, and others that we must take seriously in our current political moment. Participants expand the work science does, taking up other methodologies such as story-telling and speculation, to challenge structural injustices and engage technology by posing new questions and experiments.

Technological infrastructures—from discriminatory networks to agents of surveillance—have perpetuated systemic cultural and economic oppression, and now, more than ever, our social imaginary is limiting and inaccessible. Interwoven with capitalist and racial biases and operating as globalized networks of control, science and technology overdetermine our existence. They categorize individuals according to markers such as race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship, and in turn undermine the ways in which we live and navigate our present and future worlds.

Against these forces, what possibilities arise when accelerating technologies are paused and world building is privileged? The conference expands on the works and ideas presented in the *Refiguring the Future* exhibition, offerings new insights on accessibility, biotechnologies, ecologies, and world-building.

The conference features keynote presentations from Zach Blas, who investigates issues of the internet, capitalism, and state oppression; Thenmozhi Soundararajan, who explores the power of storytelling as the most important unit of social change; and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (Princeton University), who examines the politics of social liberation movements. Additional panel discussions, workshops, and programs merge activist, artistic, and theoretical practices to examine systems of information and knowledge, classifications of the body, and connections between environmental states.

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**Conference Details:**

**February 9-10, 2019**

**Day 1: Kaye Playhouse at Hunter College  
695 Park Ave, New York, NY 10065**

**Day 2: Knockdown Center**

**52-19 Flushing Ave, Maspeth, NY 11378**

**Participants:**

Keynotes: Zach Blas, Thenmozhi Soundararajan, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor. Featured participants include Morehshin Allahyari, Ruha Benjamin, micha cárdenas, Taeyoon Choi, Bojana Coklyat, Sofía Córdova, Hayley Cranberry, Jaskiran Dhillon, Shirin Fahimi, Kadija Ferryman, Shannon Finnegan, Aljumaine Gayle, Anneli Goeller, Kathy High, shawné michaelain holloway, In Her Interior (Virginia Barratt and Francesca da Rimini), Tiri Kananuruk, Cori Kresge, Yo-Yo Lin, Cynthia Malone, Maandeeq Mohamed, Claire Pentecost, Rasheedah Phillips, Legacy Russell, Tiare Ribeaux, Ladan Siad, stud1nt, Sofía Unanue, Alexander Weheliye, and Pinar Yoldas