



**refiguring
THE
FUTURE**

reFiguring THE FUTURE

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In Her Interior, paper sculpture from *Her Eyes Were As Black As Coal...*

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TOWARDS COLLECTIVE FUTURE-MAKING

Discourses of science fiction, technology, and speculation have historically offered visions of the future that recapitulate dominant culture, projecting images of tomorrow through the existing capitalist, racist, and patriarchal structures of today. Interested in rupturing these systems, *Refiguring the Future* is inspired by artist Morehshin Allahyari's use of "refiguring" as a feminist, decolonial, and activist practice. In this exhibition, we seek to "refigure the future": to push, probe, tear apart, and re-envision what the future can be. Looking beyond the status quo, we sought out feminist, queer, decolonial, anti-racist, and anti-ableist artists concerned with our technological and political moment.

Informed by the punk ethos of DIY, the artists in *Refiguring the Future* deeply mine the historical and cultural roots of our current moment, pull apart the artifice of contemporary technology, and sift through the pieces to forge new visions of what is possible. Working across an array of mediums and approaches—from analog books to augmented reality (AR)—these artists address and examine a tumultuous present in order to produce a more inclusive future.

Artist Zach Blas points out that "like capitalism, the internet has come to exist as a totality, with no outside, no alternative, no ending."¹ *Refiguring the Future* begins by acknowledging that our current techno-political position is one of learned helplessness. This technological and political condition feels impossible to overcome; this position of powerlessness is perpetuated by the structural dominance of white, heteronormative, patriarchal perspectives. *Refiguring the Future* aims to offer new ideas to break out of the seemingly inescapable.

Blas's video *Contra-Internet Inversion Practice #3: Modeling Paranodal Space* explodes the network graph that commonly depicts the web, suggesting how other modes of interaction and connection are both possible and necessary. Morehshin Allahyari's work critiques digital colonialism, pulling elements from mythology to craft a new feminism through "practices of magic and poetic-speculative storytelling." Using tools of digital scanning and fabrication, Allahyari fashions new bodies and narratives inspired by mythological figures. In Her Interior (comprised of Virginia

¹ Zach Blas, "Contra-Internet," *e-flux Journal* #74 (June 2016).
<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/74/59816/contra-internet/>

Barratt and Francesca da Ramini) works with constraint-based methodologies to create open systems of production, aiming to decolonize authorship and prioritize more holistic ways of “doing-with-others.”

Data visualization is an important point of departure for *Refiguring the Future*, both as an artistic practice and as a way of seeing like the machine. To understand the social impact of contemporary algorithmic structures, we must first understand how data is represented and analyzed. Works by Sonya Rapoport—a groundbreaker of new media work whose experiments with gathering, processing, and representing data began in the 1970s—are the oldest in the exhibition. Her *Biorhythm* works (1980–84) translate data Rapoport collected on her physical and emotional states into both plotter-based graphs and visual icons.

Meanwhile, Stephanie Syjuco frames a continuity between the historic medium of film and the contemporary medium of code by remaking the Miles Brothers’s 1906 short film *A Trip Down Market Street* through the use of Google Earth Vision. Lauren McCarthy’s work similarly invites the viewer to critically engage with technologies that have become commonplace and to question how they are impacting our humanity. Her new work, *SOMEONE*, examines home automation technology such as Amazon Alexa, and how the intimate surveillance this service entails stems from a desire to be seen and cared for. By placing us in the position of the algorithmic agent, McCarthy invites us to understand automation from the inside out.

In most technological discourse, the body is missing—either accidentally, as an insignificant detail, or intentionally, as a shell to be surpassed. *Refiguring the Future* positions the diversity of bodies as indispensable and explicitly engages the messiness and hackability of the body as an essential substrate of culture. Barak adé Soleil’s work centers disabled bodies by sharing an experience of navigating physical disability, staging performative interventions that bring visibility both to the artist’s own body and to the built environment.

Mary Maggic imagines a future in which open-source hormones can be synthesized in the safety and comfort of a home kitchen, while Pinar

Yoldas’s sculptural works probe the scientific and ethical limits of human genetic modification and reproductive technology. Sputnik! and Tomomi Nishizawa’s photographs depict a fictional university in which female medical students engineer “perfect male doctors”—parodying the overt sexism of higher education in Japan.

Lee Blalock’s installation transforms the function of breathing into a performative, sculptural, and meditative act in order to question the dichotomy between technology and nature—demonstrating a form of personal and perhaps transcendental technological practice. Inspired by Donna Haraway’s writing in *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, shawné michaelain holloway presents training notes for BDSM acts, requiring the viewer to kneel in submission in order to engage with the work.

To refigure the future requires acknowledging our existence in an unsustainable present. In Claire and Martha Pentecost’s young adult novel, a 15-year-old activist urges her community to acknowledge the devastation already caused by climate change in coastal South Carolina. micha cárdenas and Abraham Avnisan use augmented reality to allow gallery visitors to see from the perspective of a transgender Latinx artificial intelligence character as they navigate a landscape transformed by climate change.

Together, these artists provide a starting point for conversation and future-making. They offer a view of both the present and the future that is not ordinarily visible—one that is inclusive, diverse, and filled with a multitude of bodies and vantage points. Their views are neither utopic nor dystopic, but rather engaged with the complexities of lived experience. With this, we begin to move beyond a discourse of despair and inevitability, beyond a discussion of the end of history or the end of novelty. *Refiguring the Future* aims to inspire new avenues for thought and encourage the collective construction of new paths forward, ones that are inclusive, forward-thinking, and unexpected.

Heather Dewey-Hagborg + Dorothy R. Santos
Co-curators of *Refiguring the Future*

ARTISTS



Barak adé Soleil, *Step N To This Room*, 2017.
Performance and installation, Robert Rauschenberg Art Center, Captiva, Florida.

BARAK ADÉ SOLEIL

Barak adé Soleil's creative practice draws from the African diaspora, queerness, disability culture, and postmodernism to speak to performativity and the labor of the body. Resisting pervasive notions that erase disabled and Deaf bodies from conceptions of the future, adé Soleil seeks to reflect how these communities can and will occupy space as we evolve as a society. In doing so, adé Soleil uses performative abstract markings, signing, and access aesthetics. For *Refiguring the Future*, adé Soleil has produced site-specific markings that are described as "performative impressions that center disabled and Deaf folk through an intersectional lens." Also included in the exhibition is a video made in collaboration with Deaf Spectrum, Toronto. The video features Nur Abdulle signing as a linguistic expression of mark-making.

Barak adé Soleil is a queer disabled artist of color, who has been part of the contemporary art world since 1991. Recent works include *from here to there* (2018), for the exhibition *Chicago Disability Activism, Arts & Design, 1970s to Today* at Gallery 400, University of Illinois at Chicago; and *a series of movements* (2018), presented at the 7a*11d International Festival of Performance Art, Toronto and for VAE's Everyday Series at Raleigh Contemporary Art Museum, North Carolina. Currently based in Chicago, adé Soleil works globally and engages with distinct communities across the Americas, Europe, and Africa.

MOREHSHIN ALLAHYARI

Morehshin Allawayari's ongoing work, *She Who Sees the Unknown* (2017–present), addresses digital colonialism and "refiguring" from a feminist and decolonial position. Researching female monsters, jinn, and dark goddesses of Middle-Eastern origin, Allawayari uses poetic-speculative storytelling to re-appropriate traditional mythologies. In her installation *She Who Sees the Unknown: The Laughing Snake*, Allawayari builds upon the myth of the jinn, a monstrous creature in Arabic and Persian mythology, to draw viewers into an intimate, nonlinear narrative that explores gender and sexual oppression in the Middle East. Originally found in the Arabic manuscript *Kitab al-bulhan* (Book of Wonders), the myth of the Laughing Snake presents a destructive narrative in which a female figure goes on a murderous spree, taking over a city. She is finally destroyed when she sees her own reflection in a mirror, causing her to laugh so hard that she dies.

She Who Sees the Unknown: The Laughing Snake uses mirrors to create an enclosed and distorted space. The installation includes a 3D-printed sculpture of the Laughing Snake suspended nearby a large-scale touch screen, which presents the online portal to the work. The net-art component of *She Who Sees the Unknown: The Laughing Snake* reimagines the origin myth, unfolding through a series of hypertexts and images that offer a semi-fictionalized account of the artist's coming of age in Tehran, Iran, in the 1980s and 1990s. As this narrative evolves, the snake emerges as a complex figure, drawing viewers into distorted visions of femaleness and refracting images of otherness and monstrosity. Continued development of *She Who Sees the Unknown* is supported by a joint commission from the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Liverpool Biennale; and the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT), Liverpool; as well as a 2018 Rhizome Commission.

Morehshin Allawayari is a media artist, activist, and educator who uses computer modeling, 3D scanning, and digital fabrication techniques to explore the intersection of art and activism. Born and raised in Tehran, she moved to the United States in 2007, where she currently engages with technology to document our personal and collective struggles in the twenty-first century. Allawayari's recent residencies and awards include a residency at Pioneer Works, New York; a research residency at Eyebeam, New York; and a sculpture award from the Institute of Digital Art, Ulm, Germany. Allawayari has exhibited her work at the Whitney Museum of American Art; the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the Venice Architecture Biennale, among other venues. Allawayari received an MFA at the University of North Texas, an MA at University of Denver, and a BA at the University of Tehran.



Morehshin Allawayari, *She Who Sees the Unknown: The Laughing Snake* (still), 2018. 3D-printed sculpture, touchscreen with hypertext narrative, mirrors, and sound.



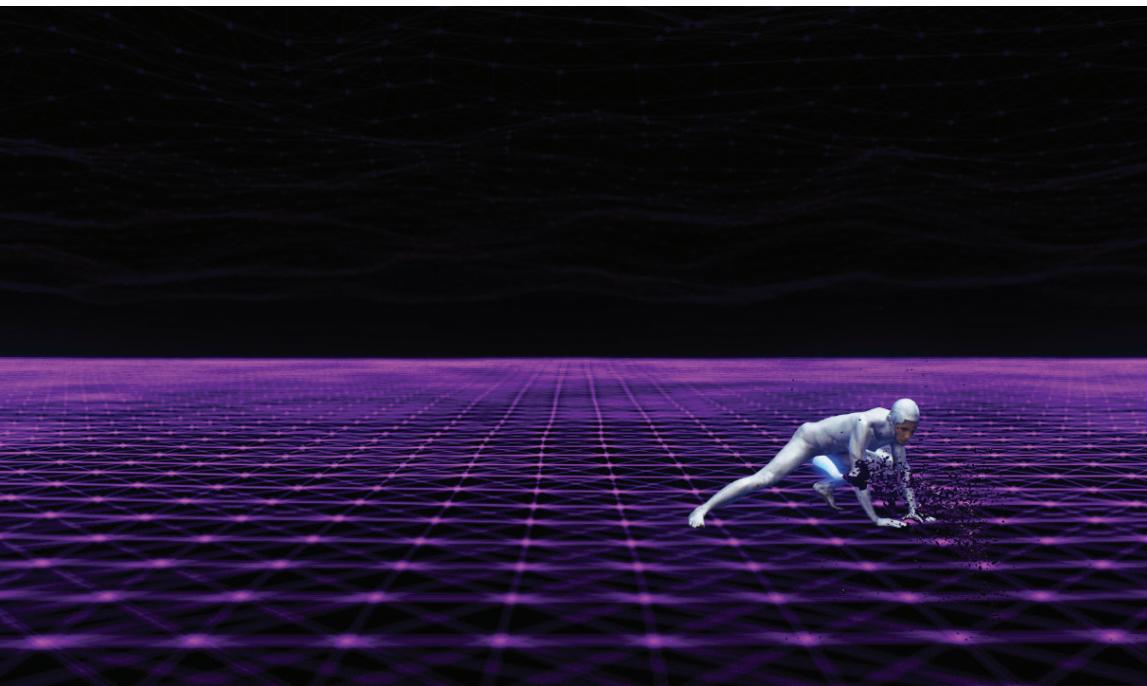
Lee Blalock, *sy5z3n_4: Medi(a)tation for Virtual Respiration* (detail), 2019.
56 resin modified Buddha models, 40 solenoids, 28 LEDs, wood, gold leaf,
custom software, video, and sound.

LEE BLALOCK

Lee Blalock's multidisciplinary practice addresses the limits and future extensions of the body as enabled by emerging technology. Through performance, painting, and programming, she imagines the liberating potential of other worlds, bodies, and systems to "express all that is censored in the performance of everyday life." *sy5z3n_4: Medi(a)tation for Virtual Respiration* replaces the natural act of breathing with a computational system of sound, data, and image, removing breath from the body. Here, fifty-six resin Buddha statues—modified with toy robot parts and outfitted with tambourine jingles, solenoids (coils of wire used as electromagnets), and LEDs—perform behaviors choreographed through custom software designed by the artist. Emphasizing the circular nature of breath, the Buddha statues are installed in a circle on a square pedestal reminiscent of a shrine, and surround a small monitor playing a video of a meditating cybermonk who performs their own algorithm. In *sy5z3n_4: Medi(a)tation for Virtual Respiration*, Blalock explores the dynamic form meditation can take when it is surrounded by signal and noise.

Lee Blalock is a Chicago-based artist and educator who presents alternative and hyphenated states of being through technology-mediated processes. Inspired by science fiction, futurism, and technology, her work is an exercise in body modification by way of amplified behavior or "change-of-state." Blalock also works under the moniker L[3]^2, whose most recent live work embraces noise and fissure as a natural state of being for bodies living in the information age. Superimposing custom module-based "Instr/augment" systems (what the artist calls "sy5z3ns") onto performers, L[3]^2 creates conditions for meditation through generative and repetitive behavior. Blalock is an Assistant Professor in the Art and Technology Studies Department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She holds an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BS from Spelman College, Atlanta.

ZACH BLAS



Zach Blas, *Contra-Internet: Jubilee 2033* (still), 2018.
Video, 29 min.

Zach Blas's three-channel video installation presented in *Refiguring the Future* includes works from Blas's series *Contra-Internet*, 2014–18. *Contra-Internet* confronts the transformation of the internet into an instrument for state oppression and accelerated capitalism. Invoking a practice of utopian plagiarism, *Contra-Internet* appropriates queer and feminist methods to speculate on internet futures and network alternatives. At the center of this installation is a scene from his short film *Jubilee 2033*, which re-imagines filmmaker Derek Jarman's 1978 queer punk film *Jubilee*. *Jubilee 2033* tells the story of a futuristic queer society rising from the ashes of a post-apocalyptic Silicon Valley. This excerpt features Blas's character Nootropix (played by performance artist Cassils), a “contra-sexual, contra-internet prophet,” dancing to Andre Bocelli’s “Con te partirò.” *Jubilee 2033* was commissioned by Gasworks, London; Art in General, New York; and MU, Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

Zach Blas is an artist, filmmaker, and writer whose practice spans technical investigation, theoretical research, conceptualism, performance, and science fiction. His practice engages with technology, queerness, and politics to question the underlying structures of contemporary technologies. He has exhibited, lectured, and held screenings internationally, including at the Gwangju Biennale, South Korea; the 68th Berlin International Film Festival; Art in General, New York; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands; and Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City. Blas's writing has been widely published including in *You Are Here: Art After the Internet* (Cornerhouse Books); *Queer: Documents of Contemporary Art* (The MIT Press and Whitechapel Gallery); and *e-flux journal*. He is a Lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London, and a 2018–20 Arts and Humanities Research Council Leadership Fellow.

MICHA CÁRDENAS + ABRAHAM AVNISAN



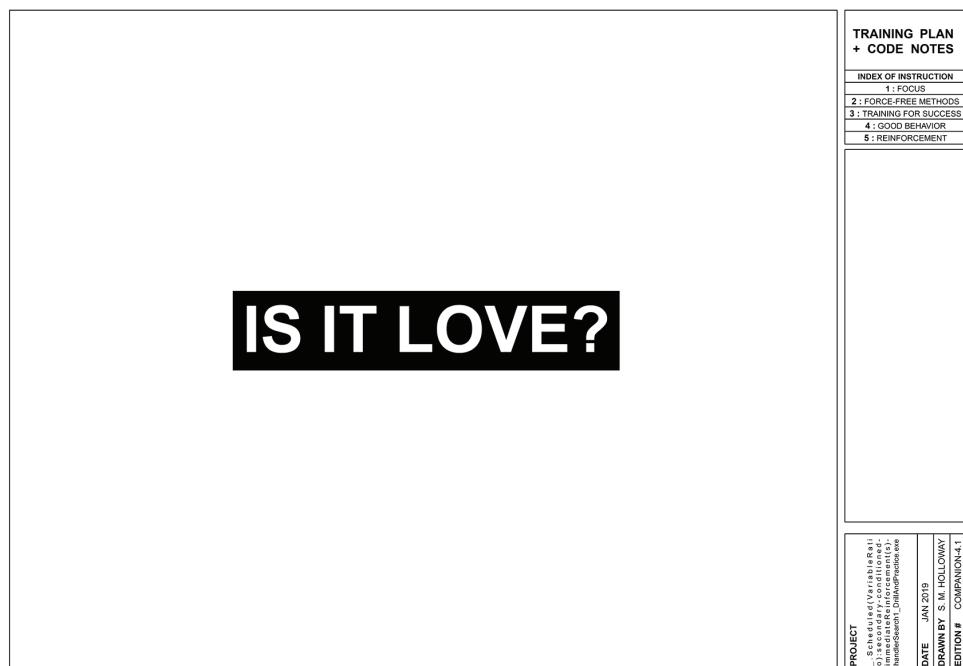
micha cárdenas and Abraham Avnisan, *Sin Sol (No Sun), Walk* (detail), 2018.
Augmented reality game installation.

Sin Sol (No Sun), Walk is an immersive augmented reality game in which players experience a devastating environmental event, and must escape massive wildfires. The work explores the complex intersections of climate change, gender, disability, immigration, and mental health to consider how climate change disproportionately affects marginalized communities. The game centers around Aura, a trans-Latinx artificial intelligence hologram. From her vantage point fifty years in the future, she tells the narrative of the environmental collapses that have occurred in her past, which is our present. Aura is joined by her dog, Roja, who leads players on a journey to escape the wildfires and to find oxygen capsules containing poetry. These poems reveal the story to players as they progress through the game. The environments in the game, which also functions as an environmental archiving project, include actual 3D scans from present-day forests in the Pacific Northwest of the United States.

micha cárdenas is an artist and theorist who completed her Ph.D. in Media Arts + Practice in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California. Her book in progress, *Poetic Operations*, proposes algorithmic analysis as a means to develop a trans-of-color poetics. cárdenas's co-authored books *The Transreal: Political Aesthetics of Crossing Realities* (2012) and *Trans Desire / Affective Cyborgs* (2010) were published by Atropos Press. The recipient of several awards including the Creative Award from the Gender Justice League (2016) and the inaugural James Tiptree Jr. fellowship (2014), cárdenas has presented her work at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; the Zeppelin Museum Friedrichshafen, Germany; the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and Centro Cultural del Bosque, Mexico City. cárdenas is Assistant Professor of Art & Design: Games + Playable Media at the University of California, Santa Cruz. She is a first generation Colombian American, born in Miami.

Abraham Avnisan is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and educator whose work is situated at the intersection of image, text, and code. He creates artist's books, mobile apps, and mixed reality performances that seek to subvert dominant narratives through embodied encounters with language, history, and philosophy. Avnisan teaches creative writing, new media art, and interactive media design as an Artist-in-Residence in the School of Interdisciplinary Arts & Sciences at University of Washington Bothell. He has presented his work at numerous institutions including at the Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen; the Henry Art Gallery, University of Washington, Seattle; the Chicago Architecture Biennial; and at Post-Screen: International Festival of Art, New Media, and Cybercultures, Lisbon. Avnisan has been widely published, appearing in *INDEX Vol. 6: An Annual Document of Performance Practice*; the *Electronic Literature Collection, Volume 3*; *Stonecutter*; and *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, among others.

SHAWNÉ MICHAELAIN HOLLOWAY



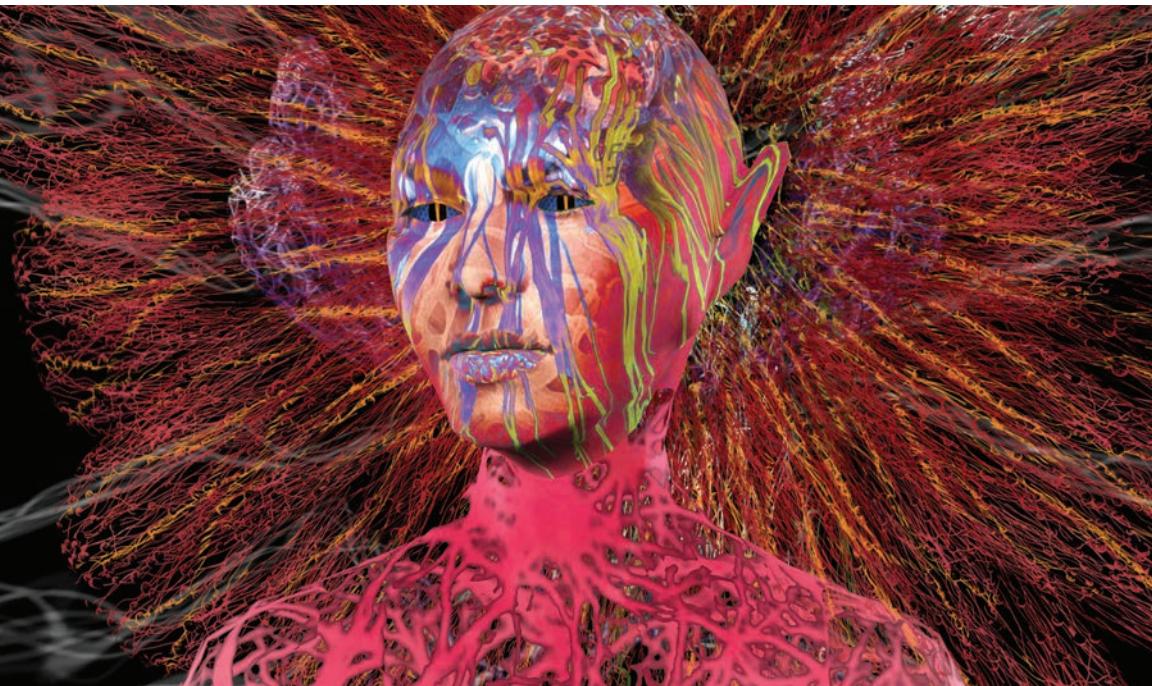
shawné michaelain holloway, *.Scheduled(VariableRatio):secondary-conditioned-immediateReinforcement(s)-handlerSearch1_DrillAndPractice.exe_Companion4.1* (detail), 2019. Interactive book, plinth, and vinyl text.

.Scheduled(VariableRatio):secondary-conditioned- immediateReinforcement(s)- handlerSearch1_DrillAndPractice.exe_Companion4.1 is part of shawné michaelain holloway's ongoing *Chambers Series* (2017–present), which is comprised of performance scores and their partner publications. Inspired in part by Donna Haraway's book *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness*, the project explores the dynamics of BDSM acts and, in particular, puppy play. Puppy play involves one person taking on the role of the pup and another person taking on that of the handler, and acting out a scenario not unlike a human training a pet or a person programming a computer.

.Scheduled(VariableRatio):secondary-conditioned- immediateReinforcement(s)- handlerSearch1_DrillAndPractice.exe_Companion4.1 is the fourth of holloway's companion publications and acts as notes for a training session between a human puppy and her handler. Modeled after a set of architectural plans, it articulates the structure of intimacies inherent in behavioral training. Operative conditioning—which relies on a system of reward and punishment—is visualized throughout a series of questions and diagrams that ask readers to consider how proximity, deprivation, yearning, generosity, and need guide and manipulate our relationships to others. The plans are installed on a plinth placed on the floor of the gallery with the command “KNEEL” installed in vinyl directly before it, prompting the viewer to consent and submit to following holloway's directive in order receive the pleasurable reward of reading the text.

shawné michaelain holloway uses sound, video, and performance to shape the rhetoric of technology and sexuality into tools for exposing structures of power. She has spoken and exhibited at institutions internationally, including the New Museum, New York; Sorbus Galleria, Helsinki; The Kitchen, New York; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; and the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. holloway teaches digital publishing theory and practice in the New Arts Journalism department at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her books *(---), i'd lie if i could even, and no separation* were published in 2018 as part of the *TOO OFTEN IN THE DARK* series, an ode to bondage, refusal, and wild women. holloway is also a sex educator, teaching classes and writing about intersectional approaches to exploring our bodies and our kinks.

IN HER INTERIOR



In Her Interior, *Her Eyes Were As Black As Coal...* (still), 2019.
Mixed media installation and video, 9 min.

Her Eyes Were As Black As Coal... is a new work by the Australian collective In Her Interior (IHI), comprised of Virginia Barratt and Francesca da Rimini. Originating from a “mother” script that the artists created through experimental constraint-based writing, this installation offers expanded ways to see, so that we may better comprehend the interdependencies of our existence and reflect on what is needed for us to collectively thrive. This mixed media installation features a two-channel video including shots of Australian landscapes juxtaposed with imagery of computer-modeled avatars called Terra, Spore, and Krill. Using IHI’s script, these characters speak to themes of geology and time travel, noting that “All of the human strata will be pressed to the thickness of a single epidermal sheet.” Co-creation is essential to IHI’s practice, not just between Barratt and da Rimini, but also between IHI and others connected ancestrally to the land and materials the artists use. This approach provides a rich basis for experimentation with form and methodology, embracing multiple creative modalities and perspectives, and creating an open system of doing-with-others that prioritizes support and survival. IHI believes this is the most appropriate way to pursue a creative life in times of precarity, and is concerned with cultivating creative practices that disrupt capitalism’s commodification of the artist. *Her Eyes Were As Black As Coal...* was created in collaboration with Ashley Haywood (alembic ceramicist) and Annie Wright (hat sculptor) and is supported by the ActNow Theatre’s MakeSpace. This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body.

Formed in 2015, IHI co-creates and performs live works of spoken, sung, and recorded text and video within site-specific installation environments. As two of the four co-founders of cyber-feminist group VNS Matrix (est. 1991), da Rimini and Barratt have contributed to critiques of gender and technology for over three decades. In 2016, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of VNS Matrix’s *A Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century*, the group wrote and performed a new text, titled “A Tender Hex for the Anthropocene,” and curated a special section on affective labor for *Runway* magazine.

MARY MAGGIC



Mary Maggic, *Housewives Making Drugs* (still), 2017.
Video, 10 min. 12 sec.

“What if it were possible to synthesize hormones in the kitchen?” This is the question Mary Maggic’s speculative work *Housewives Making Drugs* addresses. Set as a fictional cooking show—part Martha Stewart and part Martha Rosler—*Housewives Making Drugs* is from Maggic’s larger project *Open Source Estrogen*, which generates DIY protocols for the extraction and detection of the estrogen hormone from bodies and environments, demonstrating its micro-performativity and potential for gender-hacking.

Employing an over-the-top performativity, *Housewives Making Drugs* stars two trans-femme hosts, Maria and Maria, who teach the audience how to cook their own hormones step-by-step through a simple “urine-hormone extraction recipe.” At the same time, they banter wittily about body and gender politics, institutional access to hormones, and the problems of heteronormative society. Set in the domestic and politicized space of the kitchen, *Housewives Making Drugs* demystifies scientific protocols—removing them from their patriarchal and capitalist power structures to stage a scenario where the housewife-hacker gains endocrinological knowledge and body/gender sovereignty while subverting the traditional gendered norms typified by the kitchen.

Mary Maggic is a non-binary artist working at the intersection of biotechnology, cultural discourse, and civil disobedience. Their work includes documentary video, scientific methodology, public workshopology, performance, and large-scale installation. Maggic holds a BSA in Biological Science and Art from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, and an MS in Media Arts and Sciences from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge. They have exhibited and performed at numerous institutions, including Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; OK Center, Linz, Austria; Haus der elektronischen Kunst, Basel; Jeu de Paume, Paris; the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London; and Spring Workshop, Hong Kong.

LAUREN MCCARTHY

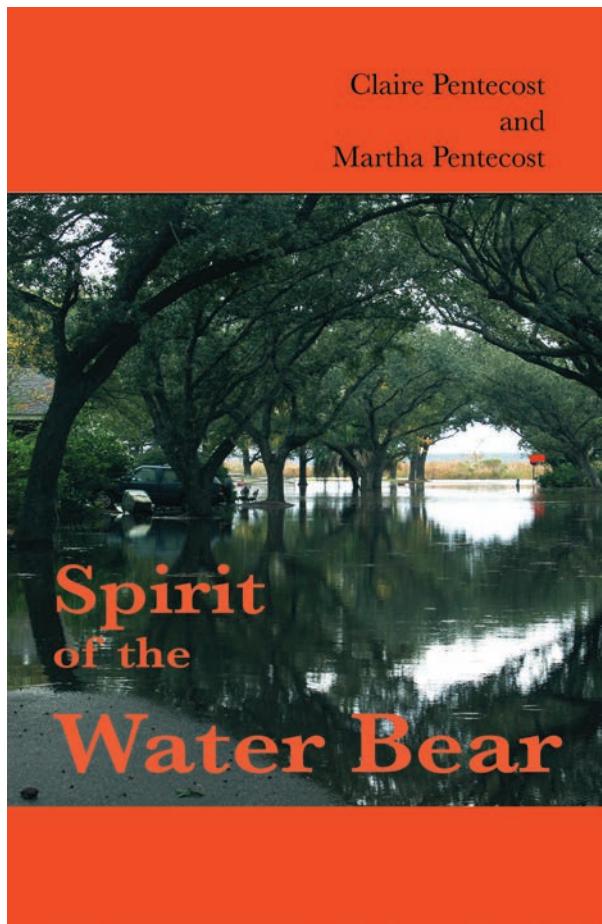


Documentation of Lauren McCarthy, *LAUREN*, 2017.
From David Leonard's film *LAUREN Testimonials*, 2017

SOMEONE is an expansion on McCarthy's previous work *LAUREN*, in which the artist attempted to become a human version of Amazon's home-intelligence device, Alexa. *LAUREN* was a durational performance lasting several days that started with an installation of custom-designed, networked smart devices, including cameras, microphones, lights, and outlets in participants' homes. This enabled McCarthy to remotely watch over participants 24/7 and control many aspects of their environments. With *LAUREN*, McCarthy aimed to be superior to an artificial intelligence assistant, her humanity allowing her to better relate to participants' needs.

SOMEONE takes the issues raised by *LAUREN*—intimacy versus privacy, convenience versus agency, and the role of human labor in the future of automation—a step further by asking exhibition visitors to participate in the responsibilities of being a home-intelligence device. McCarthy has worked with smart-home participants, selected through an open call, to build custom configurations using a variety of devices to capture each of their personal needs. The four participants' homes are remotely watched and controlled via a command center installed within the gallery. From their connected homes, the participants can directly request an action by calling out for "Someone." The request will be heard and seen from the command center in the gallery, thus inviting exhibition visitors to respond—stepping in as the human intelligence. *SOMEONE* was created with support from a Google Focused Research Award and the Harvestworks New Works Residency. Software and hardware developed by Harvey Moon and Josh Billions. Interface developed by Lauren McCarthy. Furniture designed in collaboration with and fabricated by Lela Barclay de Tolly. Smart home participant collaborators include Valeria Haedo, Adelle Lin, Amanda McDonald Crowley, and Ksenya Samarskaya.

Lauren McCarthy is a Los Angeles-based artist whose work examines how issues of surveillance, automation, and networks affect our social relationships. She is the creator of p5.js, an open source platform for learning creative expression through code online. McCarthy's work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Barbican Centre, London; Ars Electronica, Linz, Austria; Conflux Festival, New York; SIGGRAPH; Onassis Cultural Center, New York; IDFA DocLab, Amsterdam; and the Japan Media Arts Festival, Tokyo. McCarthy is an Assistant Professor at University of California, Los Angeles Design Media Arts program. She is a Sundance Institute Fellow and was previously a resident at CMU STUDIO for Creative Inquiry at the College of Fine Arts, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh; Eyebeam, New York; Interactive Telecommunications Program (ITP) at New York University; and Ars Electronica / QUT TRANSMIT³.



CLAIRE PENTECOST + MARTHA PENTECOST

Set in our current moment, in a coastal town in South Carolina, *The Spirit of the Water Bear* is a young adult novel that explores the devastating effects of a hurricane as experienced by the 15-year-old protagonist of the story, who is an activist and environmentalist urgently trying to get her community to consider important global issues, especially climate change. By anchoring the book in the present, the authors call attention to the irreversible damage that climate change has already caused and to the urgency for global awareness and action to slow its destruction. This is the first young adult fiction book the Pentecost sisters have written, and it is also their first formal collaboration.

Five hundred copies of *The Spirit of the Water Bear* are displayed in the gallery as part of *Refiguring the Future*, and in the spirit of access and sharing, these copies are available for visitors to take home with them.

Claire Pentecost is an artist, writer, and educator. Her projects often address the contested line between the natural and the artificial, focusing on food, agriculture, bioengineering, and anthropogenic changes. Pentecost has shown work in numerous exhibitions and venues, including Documenta(13), Kassel; the 13th Istanbul Biennial; the DePaul Art Museum, Chicago; and the Third Land Art Mongolia Biennial. She is a founding member of Deeptime Chicago and of Watershed Art and Ecology. She is a professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Martha Pentecost lives in Durham, North Carolina, where she writes and works with a number of organizations including Prisoner Visitation and Support, Haw River Assembly, Paperhand Puppet Intervention, Fullframe Documentary Film Festival, Durham Community Land Trust, and Trees Durham.

Claire Pentecost and Martha Pentecost, *The Spirit of the Water Bear*, 2019.
Trade paperback, edition of 500.

SONYA RAPOPORT



Sonya Rapoport, *Biorhythm Calendar: July, 1980*, 1980.
Mixed media collage on continuous feed computer vellum and found calendars.

Sonya Rapoport's *Biorhythm* works (1980–84), are data-oriented yet playful exploration of the human body as computer. The work was prompted by Rapoport's interest in Biorhythm Theory, which gained popularity in the late 1970s. The theory posits the existence of three different biorhythm cycles, each influenced by an aspect of human behavior: one cycle influences physical behavior; one cycle influences emotions; and one cycle influences intellectual functions. In anticipation of the Quantified-Self—self-knowledge through self-tracking—Rapoport used a commercially available biorhythm kit to predict and record her daily physical, emotional, and cognitive cycles throughout the year 1980. On large calendars, she made daily collages from the ephemera of her everyday life and art practice, creating an autobiographical portrait.

Rapoport's meticulous process of gathering data and research on the origins of Biorhythm Theory led her to conclude that her cycle was not predicted accurately using this method, exposing the potential failures and biases of computerized data collection. In the annotated plotter print *Biorhythm Sheet 1: Identical Prediction/Action Days*, 1981, she charted her data on a spiral graph, circling the thirteen days that the biorhythm prediction matched her “actions.” In an artist’s book, she graphed her own biorhythm data in comparison to the computerized predictions, which appear as sine waves. Also included in *Refiguring the Future* is video documentation of the *Biorhythm Audience Participation Performance* (Works Gallery, San Jose, 1983) and *The Computer Says I Feel...* (San Francisco Arts Commission Gallery, 1984).

Sonya Rapoport (1923–2015) is a conceptual artist best known for appropriating the aesthetics of science and digital media. Her work is characterized by groundbreaking experimentation with computers and data collection; collaboration with eminent scientists and experts in the humanities; and a profound feminist mission marked by strategic forays into male-dominated fields. Rapoport had an active role in MIT Press’ art, science, and technology journal *Leonardo*. She received her MA in painting from University of California, Berkeley in 1949, and was among the first women to do so. Rapoport’s work has been included in numerous exhibitions, including the Whitney Biennial, New York, 2006; Bienal de Arte, Buenos Aires, 2002; and Documenta 8, Kassel, 1987. Rapoport’s work was the subject of late-career retrospective exhibitions at KALA Art Institute, Berkeley, 2011; Mills College Art Museum, Oakland, 2012; and the Fresno Art Museum, Fresno, CA, 2013. Her archives are preserved in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley.



SPUTNIKO! + TOMOMI NISHIZAWA

Sputniko! and Tomomi Nishizawa's first collaboration transports us to an imaginary academy, the titular *Tokyo Medical University for Rejected Women*. The work responds to a scandal that broke out at Tokyo Medical University in August 2018, when it was exposed that the university had been deliberately lowering the entrance exam scores of female applicants for years.

Critiquing the cultural gender biases of Japan—specifically the institutional sexism of the Japanese medical industry—Sputniko! and Nishizawa created a fictional university for all of the rejected female applicants to Tokyo Medical University. Their three large-scale digital photographs take the viewer on a tour of the great achievement of Tokyo Medical University for Rejected Women: turning men into robot-doctors for hospitals across Japan. The first depicts female students operating on these men using the “Frida Machine” (a play on the robotic Da Vinci Surgical System that facilitates complex surgery using a minimally invasive approach); the second shows the finished, flawless male doctors being delivered by drone to hospitals throughout the country; and the third illustrates a doctor reporting for work at the prestigious Tokyo Medical University Hospital. Exhibited alongside the photographs are copies of the university brochure for Tokyo Medical University for Rejected Women, free for visitors to take.

Sputniko! (Hiromi Ozaki) creates multimedia installations that explore the social and ethical implications of emerging technologies. She has recently presented her work in exhibitions and venues such as the Setouchi Art Triennale, Setouchi, Japan; ZKM Center for Art and Media, Karlsruhe, Germany; the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; and the Centre Pompidou-Metz, France. Sputniko! is a Project Associate Professor at the University of Tokyo, where she is furthering her work with the Royal College of Art - IIS Design Lab.

Tomomi Nishizawa creates sculptures, photographs, and installations based on our everyday routines and our relationships to the cosmetic and medical industries. Her work investigates biotechnologies such as those using stem cells to imagine a near future where the boundaries between cosmetic and medical treatments blur, as we gain the ability to replace parts of our bodies with organically made cells.

Sputniko! and Tomomi Nishizawa, *Tokyo Medical University for Rejected Women* (detail), 2019.
Digital photographs.

STEPHANIE SYJUCO

Spectral City (A Trip Down Market Street, 1906/2018) retraces the path followed in the 1906 film *A Trip Down Market Street* by the Miles Brothers. The original film was shot in San Francisco using a black-and-white camera strapped to a cable car. Syjuco's version travels the exact route from 7th Street and Market to the Ferry Building, but uses the open source program Google Earth Vision to retrace the city. This mediated vision of real space offers commentary on the limits and distortions of machine vision. The misshapen images of city buildings and municipal landmarks, rendered completely empty of bodies and community activity, prompt reflection on the total reorganization of civic space. With the centralization of tech companies in San Francisco's mid-Market Street corridor, the fabric of the city has ruptured and splintered, creating an influx of extreme wealth and displacing long-time residents. *Spectral City* is a stark contrast to the 1906 original, which was filmed just before the Great Earthquake—an event that decimated San Francisco and many of its civic structures. Ultimately the two films are bookends of disaster: one natural and one man-made.

Stephanie Syjuco creates large-scale spectacles of collected cultural objects, cumulative archives, and temporary vending installations, often with an active public component that invites viewers to directly participate as producers or distributors. Using critical wit and collaborative co-creation, her projects leverage open source systems, shareware logic, and flows of capital to investigate issues of economies and empire. Born in the Philippines, Syjuco received an MFA from Stanford University and a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute. She is the recipient of a 2014 Guggenheim Fellowship Award and a 2009 Joan Mitchell Painters and Sculptors Award. Her work has been exhibited widely, including at MoMA P.S.1, New York; the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; ZKM Center for Art and Technology, Karlsruhe, Germany; the 12th Havana Biennial; and the Asian Art Biennial, Taiwan. She is an Assistant Professor of Sculpture at the University of California, Berkeley.

Stephanie Syjuco, *Spectral City (A Trip Down Market Street, 1906/2018)* (still), 2018.
Video, 13 min. 29 sec.



Pinar Yoldas, *Aphrodite*, 2013–18.
Digital sculpting, clay, glass, and resin.

PINAR YOLDAS

Through video, sculpture, and installation, Pinar Yoldas calls ecological and biological assumptions into question by prompting for feminist re-imagining and critical engagement with biotechnology of the near future. *Genetically Modified Gods* is a collection of objects, texts, videos, and other narrative elements that revolve around genetically altered characters, each highlighting a culturally desired trait. A study on human nature in an age where designing new life is possible, *Genetically Modified Gods* asks: what does it mean to design the next human? What do the qualities or modifications we aspire to have in a designer human say about us? How do our cultural backgrounds affect what we aspire to have in the next human?

Pinar Yoldas is an interdisciplinary designer, writer, and researcher whose work develops within biological sciences and digital technologies and focuses on post-humanism, eco-nihilism, the Anthropocene, and feminist technoscience. Her work has been shown internationally, including at Roda Sten Konsthall, Göteborg, Sweden; Polyteknikum Museum, Moscow; Ernst Schering Project Space, Berlin; NAMOC National Art Museum of Beijing; Transmediale Festival, Berlin; 14th Istanbul Biennial; and Taiwan National Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung City. Yoldas was 2015 John Simon Guggenheim Fellow in the Fine Arts. In 2018, she joined the University of California, San Diego Visual Arts Department. She holds a Ph.D. from Duke University, Durham, North Carolina; a B.Arch. from Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey; an MS from Istanbul Technical University; and an MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles. Her book *An Ecosystem of Excess* was published by Argo-Books in 2014.

REFIGURING THE FUTURE CONFERENCE

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 Simone Browne, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, and Zach Blas.

FEATURED PARTICIPANTS INCLUDE Morehshin Allahyari and Shirin Fahimi, Ruha Benjamin, micha cárdenas, Taeyoon Choi, Sofía Córdova, Hayley Cranberry, Jaskiran Dhillon, Kadija Ferryman, Bojana Coklyat and Shannon Finnegan, Aljumaine Gayle and Ladan Siad, Anneli Goeller, Kathy High, shawné michaelain holloway, In Her Interior (Virginia Barratt and Francesca da Rimini), Yo-Yo Lin, Cynthia Malone, Maandeq Mohamed, Rasheedah Phillips, Legacy Russell, Tiare Ribeaux, Sofía Unanue, Alexander Weheliye, and Pinar Yoldas.

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, offering new insights on accessibility, biotechnologies, ecologies, and world-building.

The conference features keynote presentations from Simone Browne (University of Texas at Austin), who traces Black women's creative engagement with surveillance; Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor (Princeton University), who examines the politics of social liberation movements; and Zach Blas, who investigates issues of the internet, capitalism, and state oppression. 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.

Lola Martinez + Maandeq Mohamed
Co-organizers of the *Refiguring the Future* Conference

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Refiguring the Future is organized by Eyebeam and REFRESH in collaboration with the Hunter College Art Galleries.

Refiguring the Future is curated by Heather Dewey-Hagborg and Dorothy R. Santos with lead curatorial and production support from Sarah Watson, Hunter College Art Galleries Chief Curator; Sally Szwed, Eyebeam Director of Programs; Lola Martinez, Eyebeam/REFRESH Curatorial and Engagement Fellow; Jenn Bratovich, Hunter College Art Galleries Exhibitions and Publications Manager; and J. Soto, Eyebeam Production and Access Coordinator. The *Refiguring the Future* partnership was initiated by Eyebeam's Executive Director Roderick Schrock in conversation with REFRESH.

The *Refiguring the Future* conference is co-organized by Eyebeam/REFRESH Curatorial and Engagement Fellow Lola Martinez and REFRESH collective member Maandeeq Mohamed, with production support from Eyebeam Production and Administrative Assistant Yidan Zeng.

Refiguring the Future is the result of the hard work and insight of numerous individuals and we respectfully acknowledge the labor of everyone involved in realizing this project. We thank the Hunter College Art Galleries staff: Marie Coneys, Phi Nguyen, and Jocelyn Spaar; as well as AV technicians Dominika Ksel and Carlos Rigau. We thank the Eyebeam staff: Maddie Pinney, Joanna Gould, Sarah O'Connell, Adrian E. Rivera, Marisa Mazria Katz, Nick Leavens, and Magali Duzant. We are grateful to Jesse Gammage, Cathy Leibowitz, and Natalie Wedeking for their work on this publication. We wish to acknowledge artist Barak adé Soleil for offering insights into access and accessibility surrounding the exhibition and we extend our appreciation to Ezra Benus, disability arts and access advisor.

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EYEBEAM

Eyebeam is a platform for artists to engage society's relationship with technology. Technology's effect on our future is always changing and difficult to understand. Through exploratory process and emotionally compelling output, Eyebeam believes that artists can help us visualize and realize a more just future. Eyebeam provides both space and support for a community of diverse, justice-driven artists. Our annual residency program, highly engaged community of alumni, advanced tools and resources, and shows and events help our artists bring their work to life and out into the world. Eyebeam enables people to think creatively and critically about technology's effect on society, with the mission of revealing new paths toward a more just future for all.

HUNTER COLLEGE ART GALLERIES

The Hunter College Art Galleries, under the auspices of the Department of Art and Art History, have been a vital aspect of the New York cultural landscape since their inception over a quarter of a century ago. The galleries provide a space for critical engagement with art and pedagogy, bringing together historical scholarship, contemporary artistic practice, and experimental methodology. The galleries are committed to producing exhibitions, events, and scholarship in dialogue with the intellectual discourse generated by the faculty and students at Hunter and serve as an integral extension of the department's academic programs.

REFRESH

ART X TECH X SCIENCE BIENNIAL

REFRESH is a collaborative and politically engaged platform established in 2016. As a collective, REFRESH begins with inclusion as a starting point for pursuing sustainable artistic and curatorial practices across the fields of art, science, and technology.

REFRESH developed out of a social media campaign started in 2015 by its co-founders Heather Dewey-Hagborg and Addie Wagenknecht, along with others. The campaign, #KissMyArs, exposed the problematic politics of the Golden Nica, the top prize awarded by the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, Austria: for over thirty years, the Golden Nica has almost exclusively been given to men. The only woman to win to date is Lynn Hershman Leeson. The #KissMyArs campaign went viral, bringing attention to and instigating a debate about the gender inequality of the award. In 2016, Dewey-Hagborg and Wagenknecht, along with the artist Kathy High and the art historian Camilla Mørk Røstvik, wrote an editorial for *The Guardian* that called for institutions like Ars Electronica to set a global example of giving marginalized artists a seat at the table by reshaping these competitions to make them more inclusive and relevant.

The article was widely read and shared, but Ars Electronica never responded. This was the autumn of 2016, in the wake of Trump and Brexit. It was no longer enough to problematize the present—we needed bold new visions of the future and ideas from outside the mainstream. After two years of naming the problem, it was time to create new structures to elevate the voices of those working at the intersection of art, science, and technology who were not being heard and who could offer fresh perspectives on this transdisciplinary practice—and REFRESH was born.

REFRESH's current members include Salome Asega, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Kathy High, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Maandeq Mohamed, Tiare Ribeaux, Camilla Mørk Røstvik, Dorothy R. Santos, and Addie Wagenknecht.

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

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205 Hudson Street
Entrance on Canal between Hudson and Watts
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Hours: Wednesday–Sunday, 1–6pm

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BARAK ADÉ SOLEIL

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