



למען
 BEYOND
 SOMEWHERE
 מא וראא מְקָאן מָא

In the 1960s, Hugh Everett – a young doctoral student of astrophysics at Princeton University – laid the groundwork for the theory of multiple universes (the *Multiverse*). At the core of his theory was the claim that countless other universes exist in parallel with our own. Today, scientists who subscribe to physics theories such as inflationary cosmology, string theory, and quantum mechanics argue that every measurement conducted in space leads to quantum splits that cause endless bubble universes to form. Each new bubble created then proceeds to develop differently and independently from those around it.

Although the multiple universes hypothesis is controversial within the scientific community, it has raised questions, conjectures, and speculations, and has fired the imagination of many at a time when science fiction and fantasy genres have been very popular in literature and cinema. *Beyond Somewhere* seeks to examine the speculative potential inherent in this scientific hypothesis as reflected in art. The exhibition is laid out in the Museum like a constantly splitting multiverse, dispatching its visitors to the realms of fiction, fantasy, mysticism, and metaphysics, and toward virtual spaces and changing states of consciousness.

Through acts of defamiliarization, the seven installations featured in *Beyond Somewhere* seek to challenge the laws of reality, to look differently at images, both close and distant, to shift contents from one context to another and connect them anew – somewhat strange and somewhat familiar. Surreal and symbolic, the works seem to caper about in the realms of fiction and fantasy, disrupting times across a chronological range that extends from the beginning of evolution to the future. Many disciplines – archaeology, architecture, art history, folklore research, religious studies, fantasy, science fiction, and more – have served as sources of inspiration and of references for these works. Each formulates an individual, hybrid and coherent universe in its own

unique, idiosyncratic language. Placed in close proximity to each other, they are akin to new bubble universes.

Beyond Somewhere intervenes in the Museum's familiar circulation routes, dictating alternative ones instead. As one spends time in the space, whose architectural configuration has been changed, and glides between the various universe-installations, one experiences a growing sense of destabilization and disorientation. The blocking of certain passages and openings in the building and the redirection of visitors through it is designed to recalibrate their consciousness into a new state – beyond somewhere.

By oscillating between conscious imagination and states of dreaming and hallucination, the installations relinquish their grip of the familiar and urge us to break away from the mundane, and perhaps even hide from it – only to make a sharp U-turn back to Earth, to the ground of reality filled with contradictions, complexities, and uncertainties. The exhibition invites one to gaze inward and outward with irony, humor, and skepticism, and to come face to face with the unknown, the wishes and fears that lie at the heart of what it means to be human.

A 1967 work by Bruce Nauman consists of the phosphorescently illuminated sentence *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*, set in the form of a spiral made of neon lights. That sentence, with its mix of ruefulness and humor, might be understood as Nauman's appeal to those who see art as something that pertains only to the imagination and is divorced from reality. *Beyond Somewhere* suggests a complex gaze – that sees the past, exists in the present, and is both enthralled by the future and intimidated by it – to address the power and necessity of imagination and its impacts on artistic creation, on the individual, and on society.

I

Noa Yafe

Exodus

Since time immemorial, journeys to distant planets have always fired the human imagination. Human beings imagine that beyond the solar system lies a captivating space, teeming with novel alien intelligences, with the potential to save humanity in the aftermath of an apocalypse. Space is the unknown: extraordinary, dangerous, volatile, but also harboring hope; we are not alone. The possibility that other civilizations might exist somewhere out there, in galaxies lightyears away from our world, is a starting point for many *auteurs* in the science fiction genre in literature and film.

Exodus, Noa Yafe's multifocal installation, takes place in the tension between the speculative and futuristic and the anachronistic, between the metaphysical and material. The entrance foyer to the Museum and its wall of exposed, Brutalist concrete are the conceptual and constructive underpinnings of the installation. The four works of which it is comprised – *Om*, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, *Golden Dawn*, and *Snakes and Ladders* – surround the foyer, and are revealed through an array of windows and openings like familiar and fictional cosmological landscapes that have breached the Museum's boundaries and invaded it. Yafe challenges the Museum space and subverts the architectural layout of the building by blocking passages, closing openings, rendering functional zones into display spaces, and imposing sound, lighting, and sculptural actions on the space. These transmutations create a sense of disorientation, and the entrance foyer – which is meant to mediate between the Museum's exterior and interior – brims with the illusion of a fictional transgalactic dimension that is alien and strange.

In *Exodus* Yafe continues to develop her unique artistic language – works that shift constantly between the language of photography and sculpture, between 2D and 3D. To this end, she uses replications, reflections, disruptions, and games of lighting, color, and scale to push the boundaries of the genres in which she operates. The images merge together into deceptive optical compositions, fusions of 3D elements assimilated within the building's architecture. Yafe's works contain mythical and religious symbols from monotheism, paganism, mysticism, and spirituality, and their presence in the space is delicate and vulnerable – as though they were interstellar hybrid creatures. The array of images that can be seen through the glass panels and walls blend together the concrete and the fantastical-fictional. In a futuristic-surreal language, Yafe's work maintains an aesthetic and thematic affinity to science-fiction cinematography of the 1960s and 1970s, in particular the iconic works by Stanley Kubrick and Alejandro Khodorovsky.

Exodus revolves around the material as well as around the hypothetical, moving between a tangible present and a potential one. The need to break through boundaries into the unknown is also the need to escape from the self – only to discover, beyond the corner, that the dread of extinction and oblivion lies within us.



Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare*, 1781, oil on canvas, 101x127 cm, Institute of Arts, Detroit, Founders Society Purchase with funds from Mr. and Mrs. Bert L. Smokler and Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence A. Fleischman

II

Uri Zamir

Delirious Sailing

The installation *Delirious Sailing* sits in the museum space like an improbable and captivating mirage, shrouded in layers of primordial knowledge, as a kind of primeval collective subconscious gathered from the dawn of human evolution. It is an amorphous space replete with symbolism – a cross between smart entertainment venues, sacred halls, and polished exhibition spaces – with sensual and seductive sculptures, forming a surreal composition of pomp and pathos tinged with a humorous and skeptical spirit.

The work examines seminal moments in which human consciousness loses grip of reality, the ego is repressed, and the self is blurred. The familiar evades and eludes us – as though in a dream, in a trance, or in a state of loss of sanity – and in its place emerges a primal and wild twilight zone of mirrors and sensations devoid of logic or order. Fantastic hybrid sculptures, full of references from the fields of architecture, archaeology, and art history, blend the mythical and cultic with the contemporary and futuristic, like a multicultural and timeless patchwork of mysticism, paganism, and minimalist design. The installation evokes intense human emotions, merging profound despair with the potential for spiritual uplifting, and examines the healing power of art and the transformative possibilities inherent therein.

The sculpture *The Towed*, one of four that comprise the installation, presents physical injury as an expression of mental anguish and the loss of self in liminal states of crisis and collapse. At the same time, it suggests possible redemption by a process of release and healing through an encounter with the adjacent sculptural ensemble. Inspired by the work of Henry Fuseli, *The Nightmare* (1781), it renders that image of a maiden in a state of sleep paralysis into a mattress-like object that has fingers with sharp fingernails. The latent terror of Fuseli's painting is realized in this installation, its consequences manifestly apparent: the floor and walls are wounded, with signs of desperate human-like clawing attesting to a struggle that has just ended. The preponderance of signs on the surface is an expressive drawing of violent eroticism.

The works *Vase of the Seven Elders*, *The Chain of Acceptance*, and *Swing with an Earring* appear in the installation as energetic mediation channels of cathartic power. Each contains symbols of a religious aspect that have been abstracted, and together they link the celestial with the earthly, providing relief for the lost soul. The unmediated encounter with them while roaming about the theatrical-ritualistic space suggests to visitors that they absorb the conscious change that can occur in the space between the mystical, the ecstatic, and the spiritual in a domain where corners are rounded and both wakefulness and slumber converge with the dream.

III

Reouth Keren

Soul Seeker

In an age of accelerating technological development, far-reaching scientific discoveries are occurring at a dizzying rate. They evoke astonishment accompanied by a feeling of horror, and offer a cure, improvements, and even alternatives for the human.

Soul Seeker is a reflection on the ramifications and meanings inherent in humanity's ability to conjure the "non-existent," to forge a reliable replication of itself. Across four stations throughout the Museum, the life story of X – a fictional figure living in virtual spaces – unfolds. The exhibition spaces in which she appears and her encounters with visitors give her existence validity and allow her to take part in our reality.

X is the product of a set of carefully crafted combinations. Her character is based on visual information and borrowed content – the product of a collective artistic process, a joint work in which many people took part. She was developed from technological devices and artificial intelligence that are available online and at databases created by the artist herself. Her physiognomic characteristics are based on many human profiles, and her emotional world is based on the fears, desires, and fantasies of friends who have been invited to contribute and teach her how to feel. Objects of profound sentimental value were collected from dozens of participants, scanned, and 3D-printed to form a repository of moments that make up X's "artificial self."

This figure is at once individual and unique, yet also completely generic – a replication of the human. Her existence highlights the availability of the information that is accumulated and stored on various platforms. Snippets of memory, emotions, and thoughts of all of us are scattered across dozens (perhaps hundreds) of databases, both offline and online, physical and virtual. Artificial Intelligence, code-based technologies, augmented reality, etc. are all portents of the ability of science to provide reliable alternatives to humanity, thereby undermining its validity and substance. *Soul Seeker* is an endless journey through the Museum's exhibition spaces, in which X undergoes a process of humanization and learns, with the artist's mediation, how to feel, love, or simply be. Her failures do not discourage her, revealing the tragic nature of her existence and the paradox inherent in her being.

The installation highlights the emergence of a parallel, ever-evolving world, in which the possibility of distinguishing between original and copy, between human and programmed, is diminishing day by day. At the cusp between the human and its imitation or replacement, technological progress raises moral and ethical issues and points to an unknown future, in which humanity may be utterly superseded by a new world of replicas.



René Magritte, *Personal Values*, 1952, oil on canvas, 80.01x100.01 cm, collection San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, purchase through a gift of Phyllis C. Wattis © ADAGP, Paris, 2022

IV

Tal Gafny

Personal Values

The belief in life after death has transcended historical eras, and is shared by many cultures and religions. What happens after death? Does one go to an actual place that exists somewhere out there? And how does the transition take place? These questions have preoccupied humanity since time immemorial. It seems as though "this world" and "the afterlife" are intertwined, that one is an extension of the other. They interact and affect each other in the realm between the real and the imagined: one seemingly tangible, unequivocal, and existing in the present, the other perceived as eternal, expressed in spirit, and subject to interpretation.

The installation *Personal Values* consists of two adjacent spaces that illuminate and resonate with each other in a kind of distorted reflection. It is a dual, non-hierarchical, space, at once continuous and bidirectional. Despite the differences between them, the two spaces have a common formal basis. The sculptural objects and architectural elements installed in them draw their inspiration from different spheres – be it private, public, religious, secular, ancient, or contemporary. All these flow from one space to the next, reappearing in various guises and arrangements. Collectively, they form a transformative space that addresses the question of continued human existence after death and present an interpretive representation of "this world" and "the afterlife." However, the two spaces are fundamentally different. One is organized around altar-like stages, and is formal and functional, of a cultic or worshipping nature, with each element having a clear and predetermined role. The second space is multifocal, free of any purpose, and items are scattered about in it as though in the aftermath of a game.

The installation *Personal Values* borrows its name from René Magritte's painting of the same name (1952), which depicts a collection of objects in a room whose walls are painted sky blue with clouds. The scale of objects in the painting is unusual, and the sky-like walls conflate interior and exterior. The installation, like the painting, is of a surreal, enigmatic, and encoded nature, and engages with the symbolic and sentimental meanings of objects. It suggests other values, both visible and concealed, that are inherent in every object. An object – be it organic, man-made, or industrial – is also a symbol of a place or ideology, subject to interpretation, and a mark of economic, social, and cultural values.

The need to experience reality and life as unending is not unique to the notion of the afterlife, but also pertains to the human aspiration for a flexible existence, the ability to change, be changed, and recur. The duality – of space and of objects – is a kind of "second chance," akin to multi-directional evolution. It hints at the possibility of ever more spaces, in countless variations.

V

Shir Handelsman

No More Candy for You

The ability to imagine seems to be an inextricable part of being human, almost as much as breathing. Imagination is essential to freedom of thought, affecting everyday actions, big and small, and the formation of self-identity. Both a person's private world and universal development and progress are shaped, nourished, and largely affected by the imagination. Imagine a world without imagination. But occasionally, the ability to imagine, which to many seems to be self-evident, goes out of whack – completely absent, or conversely overly active. What feelings might arise when the ability to imagine fades, when the ability to translate a thought, idea, or memory into a visual image is lost? And vice versa: What would it be like to have a world in which the imagination is unbridled, turning it fantastic, saturated, and tumultuous, light years away from the actual one?

On the axis between fiction and reality, *No More Candy for You* raises questions about the human imagination and the psychological mechanisms involved. The work presents two contrasting conditions: *aphantasia* and *hyperphantasia*. Aphantasia is a relatively new discovery in the study of cognition: an innate or trauma-induced state, marked by the inability to visually imagine even familiar things that have been seen recently. Hyperphantasia is a situation in which the imagination is rich and alive, and all the senses are working intensely in tandem and at once – which, in extremis, can trigger an inability to distinguish between fiction and reality, provoke psychosis, and cause suffering and pain.

The central character in *No More Candy for You* is based on the case of MX – the first person diagnosed with aphantasia. In the tension between the two extreme states, he embarks on a psychedelic journey and experiences a cognitive reversal: from a state of complete inability to imagine, to a wild and uninhibited hyper-imagination embodied in the appearance of inflatable air dancer dolls. Drawn into illusions, he becomes a victim of his own imagination. He is engulfed by sound, color, and movement, between a sweeping fantasy and a disturbing and violent hallucination, spiraling out of control and captivated by the sights that he discovers within himself.

This work raises questions about the power of imagination and its effects on the individual's sense of reality. At the same time, it wonders about its place in art, which is often manifested through the darkest fantasies.

VI

Daniella Meroz

Bouncing Ball

The video work *Bouncing Ball* shows a polarized world forged by just two actions – hitting the ball and escaping from it. On manicured lawns, figures are seen engaged in relentless attack on others using a single game ball, or running from it. The ball offers the central viewpoint of the work and is its plot generator. The video presents an imaginary world populated by characters that are fantastic, colorful, and humorous but also vulnerable. Their role is defined by their shape, attire, and attributes. Their limitations and narrow worldview, too, serve their destiny in the world. As in mythological plots or in superhero depictions, the imprint and characterization of the figures are deterministic, depending on their intended role in the great scheme of things.

The work traces a reality of instrumental existence, as though it were a nature documentary, and reveals a fixed "food chain" in which the strong survive and the weak bear the brunt. The relationships between the characters play out around actions that are essentially similar to ball games. Closer inspection reveals the predetermined rules and roles, the unequal power relationships that have been established between the actors, and how each figure's pleasure is a relishing of the pain it inflicts on another. The hierarchical relationships at work attest to the joint fate of the characters of Meroz's fictional universe: all, without exception, are denied the chance of ever escaping the predestined outcome.

The work *Bouncing Ball* draws inspiration from many visual and textual sources, from the classical era to contemporary popular culture: mythologies, figures from the repertoire of commedia dell'arte and the Bauhaus theater, folk dance movements and gestures, and so forth. Meroz interweaves in her work principles from theological doctrines and political ideologies of totalitarian regimes, to create a world of fantasy that operates according to an internal logic. The video suggests a disillusionment and disappointment with ideologies of the past, and presents a naive childlike aesthetic that masks a reality of a brutal struggle for survival. Echoing the collapse of the utopian dream, it casts doubts on the feasibility of a humanist society that upholds values of equality and peace.

VII

Maya Aroch

After Hours

The installation *After Hours* is a fantastic environment set between reality and dream, a monumental configuration of sculptures and drawings that creates a synthesized landscape on a monochromatic white-gray-black spectrum. The installation's title suggests a "parallel" time taken out of the linear timeline, subverting the tangible and belonging to a world of fantasy and hallucination that disregards familiar logic and the laws of reality. The line between reality and fiction is also blurred in the range of Maya Aroch's invented images. Her figures and images are the product of a process of liberated consciousness and create a rich, child-like, and magical idiosyncratic lexicon – like a dream that has arisen from the depths of consciousness to the surface of the installation, in which candles weep, jugs run to the moon, and a flock of swans assume the shape and body of the figure 2.

After Hours exists as an artificial ecosystem, full of internal contradictions that merge together in exemplary harmony. The values of three different sites – the Park, the Zen Temple, and the Cave – serve as its source of inspiration and conceptual and aesthetic starting points. The engineered Park provides an escape from the daily routine, or a substitute for it, as well as an opportunity for amusement and pleasure. The Zen garden has a decidedly spiritual-ceremonial quality, offering a meditative spell in a man-made space with an aesthetic of refined reduction, and the chance of disengaging experiences and emotions from the fleeting moment. Conversely, the Cave is the embodiment of the wild and natural – a refuge and hiding place in a primeval, raw form.

Within Aroch's garden, in its representations of nature – plain, hill, valley, and reservoir – there are sculptural objects that derive from and merge with them. The silent elements are seemingly shaken into life through movement and sound, charging and activating the senses. Deep within the installation are four rows of graphite drawings – each capturing a private microcosm with a narrative that arises from the consciousness outwards. Their presence underlines the distinct quality of the installation, as though it were a closed site with unique cultural symbols. The materiality of *After Hours* and its configuration highlight the inner contradiction it captures, as the topography merges into decorative elements: a wall-to-wall carpet covers the floor, unifying the scenery's outlines and challenging the dichotomy between interior and exterior.

Within the timeless bubble, Aroch establishes a deceptive reality that takes shape as a ceremonial space, a cultic setting, or a pilgrimage site – exerting influence on the visitors and triggered by their presence. *After Hours* is a space in which the fictional and the fantastic mingle with the known and familiar, where the consciousness is liberated and roams from the body to an obscure dimension in which everything is possible.

Beyond Somewhere
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Exhibition
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