

Beyond Somewhere

Noa Yafe, Uri Zamir, Reouth Keren, Tal Gafny, Shir Handelsman, Daniella Meroz and Maya Aroch

Herzleyia Museum of Contemporary Art

July – December, 2022

In the 1960s, Hugh Everett – a young doctoral student of astrophysics at Princeton University – laid the ground for the theory of multiple universes (the *Multiverse*). At the core of this 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 reflects 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 towards virtual spaces and changing states of consciousness.

Through acts of defamiliarization, the seven installations feature in *Beyond Somewhere* seek to challenge the laws of reality, to look differently at images, both close and distant, to shift content from one context to another and connect them anew – somewhat strange and somewhat familiar. Surreal and symbolic, the works seem to caper about in realms of fiction and fantasy, disrupting times across a chronological range that extends from the beginning of evolution to the future. Many disciplines – archeology, 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. Places 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 changes, and glides between the various universe-installations, one experiences a glowing 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 installation relinquishes their grip of the familiar and urge to break away from the mundane, and perhaps even hide fro, 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 illuminates sentence *The True Artist Helps the World by Revealing Mystic Truths*, set in the form of a spiral made of neon light. 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 impact on artistic creation, on the individual, and on Society.