

Hypernatural Forces, NEW NOW (Essen, 2 Jun 23)

UNESCO World Heritage Site Zeche Zollverein, Essen, Germany, Jun 02, 2023
newnow-festival.com/en

Rafael Dernbach

A conference on “Hypernatural Forces” will take place on June 2nd as a discursive element of NEW NOW Festival for digital arts.

Can the digital be considered a hypernatural force? How are digital technologies changing our understanding of nature? And what are the ecological effects of digitalisation? These questions are at the centre of the NEW NOW conference. Without computer models knowledge about the climate crisis would be limited. And with the help of artificial intelligence biological organisms can be recombined and speculative worlds created. Concurrently, digital technologies are increasingly criticised for their role in destroying ecosystems and exacerbating the climate crisis.

We want to discuss how the digital arts are exploring new natures and images of nature. Part of the conference is a symposium by the Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities Essen (KWI) entitled “Digital Relations and New Environments”, which will analyse novel and unfinished processes of negotiation between humans, nature, and technology. A performative evening programme explores ‘hypernatures’ in artistic ways. The conference can be experienced both on site and as a livestream online and will be available with English and German translation.

10 – 13h Phase 1: Welcome to hypernature

We go in search of ‘hypernatures’ in the here and now. How do digital arts explore nature? Where do hypernatural phenomena show up in art, science and everyday life?

With Sam Balfus, diffrakt - zentrum für theoretische peripherie, Daniel Franke, Daniel Hengst, Eva Papamargariti, Sabrina Ratté, Lex Rütten and Jana Kerima Stolzer, Tabitha Swanson, Lyndsey Walsh

14 – 17 h Phase 2: Digital relations and new environments (KWI Symposium)

We dive into the world of science. How does the relationship between forces of nature and machines reconfigure itself in the face of digital technology and a nature that has become speculative?

Organisers: Dr. Anja Schürmann (KWI Essen) and Dr. Kathrin Yacavone (Philipps University Marburg)

After the first wave of digitalisation in the 1990s, which primarily shaped the reach of images, music, and videos among other media, it is now possible to speak of a new wave of digitalisation in which technologies have a direct impact on human activity – artificial intelligence (AI), writing

tools and algorithms are widely debated and discussed. We are in a phase of adaptation to our new environments, which is characterised by ambivalences and an oscillation between 'more or less' (this is also the annual theme of the KWI Essen). The pendulum movement between 'more' and 'less' marks a place of uncertainty and negotiation between humans and technology, which do not oppose each other but are responsive to each other. The symposium is dedicated to these digital relations and illuminates the thematic focal points of 'affecting' and 'balancing', from a cultural and media studies perspective. With experts from academia, some of these novel and ongoing processes of negotiation between humans, nature and technology will be analysed, discussed and debated.

Organised and moderated by: Anja Schürmann, Kathrin Yacavone

14:00 SESSION 1: AFFECTING – VIRTUAL FORCES AND (POST-)INDUSTRIAL TECHNO-AESTHETICS

Lecturers: Prof. Dr. Annette Urban, Dr. des. Manuel van der Veen and Manischa Eichwalder (Collaborative Research Centre "Virtual Life Worlds", Ruhr University Bochum). Moderation: Dr Kathrin Yacavone

The panel will provide an insight into the questions and perspectives of the "Virtual Art" sub-project, whose members are researching current artistic approaches to extended realities in the interdisciplinary context of SFB 1567 "Virtual Life World" at the Ruhr University Bochum. The starting point is the recent boom in VR art, which, unlike in the 1990s, no longer concentrates solely on counterworld designs and self-contained virtual worlds. Rather, forms of the virtual are reflected artistically and are embedded and interrelated in different life worlds. Operations such as 'worlding' are accompanied by other concepts of environmentalism and a changed understanding of human-nature-technology correlations that are very revealing for post-industrial ensembles. In several sub-projects, the research members turn to the relationship between world and lifeworld references in artistic VR experiences (Annette Urban), virtual performances (Julia Reich), virtual exhibiting (Manischa Eichwalder) and virtual-technical objects (Manuel van der Veen).

15:15 BALANCING. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN COMPUTER GAMES AS A PROBLEM OF FORM Markus Rautzenberg, Franziska Barth, Mona Leinung

The lecture examines the (computer) game as a medium of entering into relationship and directs attention to the question of how artificial intelligence can be understood as an actor without letting it jump over the sticks of its own (anthropocentric) standards.

Research results of the project "The Space Between" will be presented, which from 2018-2022 brought together artists, developers and scientists from philosophy, computer science, media and the social sciences to explore and develop scenarios for playful AI methods, epistemology, aesthetics, and strategies for hiding and highlighting AI.

16:30 FINAL DISCUSSION

Final discussion in a roundtable format with all speakers (Anja Schürmann, Kathrin Yacavone, Markus Rautzenberg, Franziska Barth, Mona Leinung, Annette Urban, Manuel van der Veen, Manischa Eichwalder), moderated by Dr. Anja Schürmann and Dr. Kathrin Yacavone.

17:30 – 20h Phase 3: The ends of exploitation

We are trying to imagine a digitalisation that breaks with the logic of exploitation of nature. What new relationships characterise life in 'hypernature'?

With Geert Lovink, Felix Maschewski, Anna-Verena Nosthoff, Rafaël Rozendaal, Pınar Yoldaş, Hannah Wallenfels

20:00 – 22h onwards

Phase 4: Everything becomes, generated

We let ourselves be carried into the night by hypernatural images, sounds and movements.

With MONOM Studios, Total Refusal

Reference:

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