



Parallel Ecologies: A Symposium on Art, Media and Environments

Abstracts

Ina Blom

Intramachinic Weather: Two Cases of Digital Atmospheric

In this paper, I will discuss two cases of what I call "intramachinic weather systems", as found in the very different works of video artist Ed Atkins and composer/sound artist Florian Hecker. In a number of Atkins's computer-generated works, the synthetic and reflexively digital worlds he creates are dominated by phenomena that we may identify as meteorological even though they have little in common with what we call weather in "our" world. In Florian Hecker's computer music, the synthesis and resynthesis of sound at the granular level produces effects and processes whose complexity might well be described in meteorological or climatic terms. Both cases allow us to discuss what is at stake for environmental thought when intensive engagement with computational systems produce a sense of parallel or "unthought" worlds - i.e. worlds that are not the effects of simulation or representation, but of properly machinic affordances. Ultimately, I want to point to the ways in which the production of machine-based atmospheric in these works rehearses questions of synthesis and abstraction that were key to late 19th Century aesthetic and industrial modernity.

Jennifer Gabrys

Re-constituting the Sensory Infrastructures of Smart Forests

Forests are increasingly sensorized environments. Whether in the form of camera traps to monitor organisms or Internet of Things to detect wildfires, there are an array of sensor technologies that observe and constitute forests in relation to scientific inquiry, Indigenous land claims, environmental governance, and disaster prevention and mitigation. This presentation will investigate the sensory arrangements that Smart Forests generate. It will ask how sensory infrastructures materialize as distributions of power and governance, while considering the sensory practices that transform and potentially re-constitute dominant regimes of perception toward other inhabitations and milieus.

KUNSTNERNES HUS

Stefanie Hessler

Sensing Nature: curatorial work at the intersection of environmental and social justice”

In this talk, I will speak about the 17th MOMENTA Biennale titled *Sensing Nature* I am currently curating. Set to open in Tiohtià:ke / Mooniyang / Montréal in September 2021, the biennale will consider environmental justice and its intersections with social justice as a matter of sensing and feeling as much as of analysis and grassroots activism. The exhibition doesn't aim to offer a toolkit for action but considers various love potions from which we can think and feel different arrangements of planetary coexistence. The artists in *Sensing Nature* invite us to forge intimate kinships with nonhuman lifeworlds that dwell in the blurred boundaries between technology and ancestral wisdoms. They propose that we listen—and observe, smell, touch, speak—to the land, the water, the air not with the aim of distantly understanding, grasping, or exploiting, but to resonate, to vibrate, to be together.

Synne Tollerud Bull/Bull.Miletic

Zoom Blue Dot: Proxistant Earth Models in the Anthropocene

In 1990 the space probe Voyager 1 captured a glimpse of Earth as a “pale blue dot,” a tiny “mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam” (Carl Sagan, 1991). Today, networked geospatial models of Earth, most prominent in the example of Google Earth, present a hyperbolic version of what I call proxistant vision, in which a user effortlessly navigates between an orbital perspective and a detailed street-level view. Fabricated through cinematized datasets, such proxistant Earth models produce an affective scalable planet far from the vibrant ecosystem that travels at 60,000 mph around the Sun (Parikka 2018). I have devised the concept of proxistance to reflect critically on the worldviews underpinning different modalities of this detail-overview effect in times of environmental crisis. Google Earth's proxistant modality can be traced back to the Apollo moon-landing era and the cosmic zoom in Ray and Charles Eameses' films *A rough Sketch* (1968) and *Powers of Ten* (1977). However, several alternative proxistant modalities also emerged within the post-minimalist art practices of the same period, emphasizing what Robert Smithson referred to as “scale consciousness.” In this essay therefore, I ask: How might analyzing these alternative proxistant modalities be of relevance for our situation today? Drawing on the relational ontology of Gilbert Simondon, as well as my aesthetic practice, I address the need for an epistemic shift of awareness brought on with the concept of the Anthropocene or, as Donna Haraway rather refers to it, the Capitalocene or the Chthulucene (2016). In this analysis, different conceptions of scale will guide a proxistant journey in which the most distant image of Earth meets the solid materials of rocks and crystals, and where scientific models of calculation and prediction shape artistic vision beyond visibility.