

PLANETARY SKINS

THE FUTURE OF DEMONSTRATION. Season 3

In the electric age we wear all of mankind as our skin. – Marshall McLuhan, 1994

Can planetarity still be at once a cartographic image and a pregnant machine, both less and more than a single backdrop? [...] borders do everything but vanish [...] already everywhere is skin and geopolitics is epidermal. – Benjamin Bratton, 2015

When we see “internet of things”, let’s make it an internet of beings. When we see “virtual reality”, let’s make it a shared reality. When we see “machine learning”, let’s make it collaborative learning. When we see “user experience”, let’s make it about human experience. When we hear “the singularity is near”, let us remember: the plurality is here. – Audrey Tang’s job description as Digital Minister of Taiwan.

The COVID-19 crisis has exposed how fragile the political and economic frameworks are on which our societies are built. At the same time, we have recognized how closely connected we are and how digital and urban platforms redesign and act on agency and the intensity of relations. The more time we spend on video conferencing apps, the more we experience a lack of closeness and bonding. And we feel trapped by corporate business models and their corrosion of privacy. Increasingly, we acknowledge that there is no way back to an old ‘normal’ and that we require solutions away from capitalist appropriation.

But almost daily we also experience that critical reflection alone does not lead to a change of perspective, another politics, another world. To the contrary, the technocapitalist differentiation machines and their business models are explicitly based on critique as (increasingly automated) capacity to differentiate, evaluate and appreciate. There is an urgency for an advanced art practice to rethink fundamental positions and offer concrete utopias that are mindful of the diversity, and often disparity, of local, regional and globe-spanning conditions, perspectives and requirements.

What is missing, for instance, are platforms that connect physical and virtual space to take better care of the many ways people meet, think, act and make together. The range of existing applications offer neither the conceptual nor the technical features required. Hence, we need to break new ground for interweaving art, architecture, science, discourse and technology on the basis of open source and free access – and a truly postdisciplinary artistic approach lends itself well to a collaborative practice that aims to reinvent the platform in an experimental-speculative way.

We think of PLANETARY SKINS as a common and multi-layered “osmotic skin” that connects digital and physical space and thus offers new forms of access for performative-discursive practices in which visitors are also involved as actors. This does not mean that our platform is built from the ground up. As the necessary technologies, applications and infrastructures are to a large extent available, the point is rather to curate and integrate them in a meaningful way.

The question we raise with *The Future of Demonstration* is the following: how do we evoke and animate the political, technological, pedagogical and aesthetic forms of resistance that the term demonstration can offer us?

To this end, we bring together technological and aesthetic expertise with practical and theoretical skills. At once artistic platform and tool, PLANETARY SKINS develops from the collaboration of practitioners from art, architecture, theory, science and technology as well as other fields of expertise. The platform exists as a physical lab and as a virtual space; ultimately, it will be available through an interactive app at any place connected to the internet.

The technosphere strikes and gets under the skin differently in different places. Hence, PLANETARY SKINS takes a step forward from reflecting critically on the rise of dataism and its hybridization of presence, which we experience today. Instead, it reaches out into local spaces and at the same time listens to their heterogenic perspectives and ideas, controversies and competencies. Instead of keeping with a purely critical attitude, the platform's artistic format is a space of creative participation, opening up to the potentials, ambivalences and conflicts of multiple presences, which we want to rethink together, advance technically, hallucinate aesthetically and imagine collectively. Because solidarity (and the courage it requires) is not just a political idea. In a networked world, it is about alliances that feed new life into conversational technologies and infrastructures in order for solidarity to be felt, fought for and lived in all diversity.

PLANETARY SKINS is a prototype for probing utopian ideas and designs with postdisciplinary form of art and discourse. It connects real and virtual space to brings artists and experts together, allow the participation of the audience and enable direct exchange and collaboration without the need to travel. In various constellations, PLANETARY SKINS explores and demonstrates new forms of resolution by 'giving space' and unfolding the connected aliveness of ecological and social, biological and technological micro- and macro-levels.

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THE FUTURE OF DEMONSTRATION. Season 3

An artistic platform conceived by Sylvia Eckermann and Gerald Nestler

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Heart of Noise festival, Innsbruck

mkt – medien.kunst.tirol

DORV TV – User-generated Television, Linz

Robota - Center for Advanced Studies, Bratislava

Tactical Technology Collective, Berlin

Technopolitics, Vienna.

PLANETARY SKINS builds on our experience with the first two seasons of the art series **THE FUTURE OF DEMONSTRATION** in 2017 and 2018. Dedicated to exploring new forms of making art, it attracted about 5000 visitors on location and over 8000 online.