

## University of Dundee

### Staying in touch

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## ARTICLE

## NODE «ARTS IN THE TIME OF PANDEMIC»

# Staying in Touch: case study of artistic research during the COVID-19 lockdown

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**Abstract**

In April 2020, artists Isabel Burr Raty, Louise Mackenzie, Robertina Šebjanič and Karolina Żyniewicz were invited by Dalila Honorato to develop research on the theme of “Staying in Touch: post-coronavirus art curating” as part of the collaborative digital art residency Braiding Friction. Working remotely across Slovenia, the UK, Poland, Belgium, Greece, USA and Portugal the group developed a speculative fiction in which art is the virus and art practitioners act as

frontline workers. Braiding historical and contemporary art, architectural and bio-art practices, the group developed potential futures for post-pandemic art spaces, resulting in a fictional account of a series of art exhibitions that coincide with a pandemic event. The research was synthesised in the form of a pseudo-documentary premiered by the Creative Europe project BioFriction on 23rd July 2020.

This article presents the transcript of the pseudo-documentary “Staying in Touch” (Honorato, Mackenzie, Żyniewicz, Burr Raty, Šebjanič and Tavares 2020, 00:00:00 to 00:47:55), set in 2039: an ergodic narrative constructed as a self-ethnographic role-playing exercise by its contributors, where alter-egos Vess L, Arri Val, K-130, Soladite Carnelian and Anise Neuchâtel reflect on their curatorial practices before, during and after the pandemic. Whilst the narrative draws from many academic and contemporary influences, any references to historical events, real people or real locales are used fictitiously. Other names, characters, places or incidents are the product of the authors’ imagination, and any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. “Staying in Touch” was edited by Pavel Tavares with the support of Cultivamos Cultura and included cameo appearances by artists Marta de Menezes, Yann Marussich and Adam Zaretsky. At its core, this work is a case study of artistic research and the possibilities of interactive engagement during the COVID-19 lockdown.

### Keywords

Curating, multispecies, COVID-19, pandemic sci-fi, artistic research, digital collaboration

### *Mantenerse en contacto: caso de estudio de investigación artística durante el confinamiento por la COVID-19*

#### Resumen

*En abril de 2020, Dalila Honorato invitó a las artistas Isabel Burr Raty, Louise Mackenzie, Robertina Šebjanič y Karolina Żyniewicz a desarrollar una investigación sobre «Mantenerse en contacto: comisariar el arte poscorona-virus» como parte de la residencia de arte digital Braiding Friction. El grupo, que trabajó de manera remota desde Eslovenia, el Reino Unido, Polonia, Bélgica, Grecia, los Estados Unidos y Portugal, desarrolló una ficción especulativa en la que el arte es el virus y las profesionales del arte actúan como trabajadoras en primera línea. Al entrelazar prácticas de arte histórico y contemporáneo, de arquitectura y bioarte, el grupo creó futuros en potencia para espacios de arte pospandémico, lo que resultó en un relato ficticio de una serie de exposiciones de arte que coinciden con un episodio de pandemia. La investigación se sintetizó en forma de pseudodocumental, que se estrenó en el proyecto BioFriction del programa Creative Europe el 23 de julio de 2020.*

*En este artículo se presenta la transcripción del pseudodocumental Staying in Touch [Mantenerse en contacto] (Honorato, Mackenzie, Żyniewicz, Burr Raty, Šebjanič y Tavares 2020, desde 00:00:00 hasta 00:47:55), ambientado en 2039, un relato ergódico construido como un ejercicio de juego de rol auto-etnográfico para las colaboradoras, donde los alter ego –Vess L, Arri Val, K-130, Soladite Carnelian y Anise Neuchâtel– reflexionan sobre sus comisariados antes, durante y después de la pandemia. Aunque el relato se basa en muchas influencias académicas y contemporáneas, todas las referencias a eventos históricos, a personas y lugares reales se usan de manera ficticia. El resto de nombres, lugares e incidentes son producto de la imaginación de las autoras, y cualquier parecido con hechos reales, lugares y personas, vivas o fallecidas, es pura coincidencia. Pavel Tavares editó Staying in Touch con la ayuda de Cultivamos Cultura e incluyó los cameos de los artistas Marta Menezes, Yann Marussich y Adam Zaretsky. Este trabajo es, en esencia, un estudio de caso de investigación artística de la posibilidad de la participación interactiva durante el confinamiento por la COVID-19.*

#### Palabras clave

*Comisariado, multispecies, COVID-19, ficción científica pandémica, investigación artística, colaboración digital*

## Introduction

No other art piece exhibited in the 21st century has caused so much controversy as Blue Tree, curated by the team at the Museum of Modern Art. This artwork is an integral part of the Staying in Touch exhibition celebrating twenty years now, after the high-security profile of the latest Staying in Touch II in 2029. Today, one year after the vaccine, and with its final opening scheduled for 2049, the three parts of the exhibition clearly seem to mark different stages of art shows' regulations related with public health. Both the curatorial team and their mythical Blue Tree have been connected with the origin of the 2019 pandemic. But who are Arri Val, Soladite Carnelian, Vess L, K130 and Anise Neuchâtel, and what is the mystery behind the art they publicly present under a complex system of rituals and security protocols?

## What is the responsibility of your department in this exhibition?

Vess L (VL): Hi, my name is Vess L and I am responsible for the Boundary Division here at MOMA and in the Boundary Division, our vision is to have no boundaries. Within that I am also responsible for Department. The Department Department focuses on how an audience will experience work within the context of an exhibition. I'm a bio-ethnographer and a biocultural curator and my research interests lie in multispecies agency and body fluidity. I like to... do what I can to connect with my ancestral and future kin, so I enjoy wild walking, rain dancing, mud bathing and open water swimming.

Soladite Carnelian (SC): My name is Soladite Carnelian. I have been in charge of the Wear-Able Departments of the *Staying in Touch* exhibition for the Museum of Modern Art. I am an astrophysicist and microbiologist and a psychic. When I was 33 years old, I survived the stroke of a thunder... and since then my sex snake is awake.

Anise Neuchâtel (AN): My name is Anise Neuchâtel. I am responsible for the PR department, Communication, and I think the name is self-explanatory; my job is to make sure that the promotion of the exhibition is run successfully.

Arri Val (AV): My name is Arri Val. At art gallery spaces, I lead the Department of Art-Intra-Action. At this department, we try to bring hypnotic storytelling to the public, and it is important to bring different relationships between multi-species, so that's why one of our lead or core ideas is multispecies care.

K-130: My name is K-130. I am an embodied prototype of bio-safety and art-safety protocol. I run the Department of Safe Transformation collaborating with the Boundary Division Department Department, The Department of Art Intra-Action and The Department of Wearables.

VL: So, the work of the Boundary Division Department Department is largely based around a philosophy inspired by the now legendary

artist, filmmaker and philosopher Trinh Minh-Ha. I have a quote from Trinh Minh-Ha here [*reading from Boundary Division Vision Statement*] "Rather than going for the new object of study, the new product to consume, one should work on new ways of seeing, of being, or of living the world." (Minh-Ha 2013) "This document outlines the division of responsibility associated with boundaries. There is no outline. There are no boundaries. There is no division. At least not biologically speaking. Lively material – molecular biological matter that constitutes life – knows no boundaries."

AV: The responsibility of the Department of Art-Intra-Action inside of the exhibition *Staying In Touch* was to make sure that the public gets the best possible outcome of experiencing the artwork. In the year 2019, the security and presence of [humans] in public spaces wasn't so complicated. It was much more challenging during the last exhibition in 2029, where touch started to be so toxic. We really had to work very closely with different departments.

AN: Now, the difference between the first and the second exhibition: before the pandemic, things were quite simple and straightforward, no? One had to do the job as good as it could be done. Well, with the pandemic things changed a bit and so my work also became more demanding concerning the evaluation of the psychological components to include and how to balance the difficulties of convincing the political status that we should keep art spaces open and not simply digitalised, and to guarantee that people wouldn't hurt people, by being too close to people. Also - and this is very tricky - playing with the fear of the contagious.

SC: For the first exhibition of *Staying in Touch*, I designed *Sex in the Public Wearables*. At the entrance of the show, guests were invited to cover their entire bodies with antiviral glowing serum. The public was also handed 10 grams of *Sniffing Pulvilio*, made of the Giant Frog (from the Amazon) powder (Cormier 2019), which was meant to boost up their immune system for the duration of the show and if vomiting occurred we provided buckets. Finally, there was an orgasmic patch at their disposition, which was placed between the L5 and the S1, while ecstasy force is released from the durational orgasmic body state into the space (Barhum, and Collins 2020; Kohn 2006). For the 2029 version, I designed the *Diadem Headset*, a mobile brain interface that covered the upper part of the cranium and provided total darkness to the eyes. The device downloaded light available in the Polaris Star and directed its photon frequency firstly to the pituitary gland (Kohn 2006, 331), enhancing the production of enough endogenous opioids to stop the natural breathing function of the body... and secondly, to the heart - providing sufficient biochemical energy to amplify the electromagnetic field of the heart (HeartMath Institute 2016) and to synchronise the hearts of the public members into one single pulse. The pineal gland chemically reacted to the heart pulsations, starting DMT [Dimethyltryptamine] production (Strassman 2001), activating an out-of-body travel experience and opening the mid-eyebrow

(Bertch 2019), to give direction inside the eco-synth-tech-cosmic bodies and worlds where the art show was taking place.

K-130: After the first show, we got were transformed, especially myself. Firstly, I got an extension to be able to spray people with some kind of safe substance, let's say a kind of sanitiser. But then something amazing happened in medicine and biotechnology. These areas collaborated with art in order to find the best possible way of avoiding infection but being still able to be whilst still being extremely open to art. I think the exhibition is brilliant. It's developing, it's shaping our consciousness, our embodiment, our way of perception.

AV: It is our collegialism [sic], it is our ways - how we managed to work with each other - it was one of the most important issues that we could continue working in these crazy times, when the virus was so present.

SC: I feel highly privileged to be able to work with the rest of the curators of the different departments that form part of the *Staying in Touch* exhibition, thanks to the encrypted software we have here and the quantum wi-fi, since I can't reveal my exact location.

## How did this all start?

AN: How did this all start? (Smile) It's an interesting story, actually this might be the collection of different stories because I think each one of us has a different memory. Back in 1999, five little girls went to the island of Chios. So now we are talking about, at least, a decade between the two events, our vacations back in Greece and the development of our own professional experiences. When I was eleven, I couldn't see and my aunt decided to take me on vacation to Greece. I used to go out at night. Guess what? I am also allergic to sunlight. So little batgirl, eleven years old, had a chance behind her door to listen to the stories of the four girls who never met during that summer. And we all had one thing in common. We all went to the meadow and we all ate the caterpillar.

SC: I have known Vess L, K130, Arri Val and Anise Neuchâtel since childhood. By coincidence we all met when we were visiting the *Pistacia lentiscus* tree (Bruni 2019). It was at this place that each one of us ate the caterpillar.

VL: Did Anise say that we met in Greece? In Chios? I don't remember that. I visited Chios as a child, many of us have. It has these wonderful trees with this amazing blue aura. I went there when I was young, my mother took me, she had also visited Chios as a child. So, when she was there - she was very young when she went there - she ate a caterpillar that had been crawling on one of the trees and later that day, she peed blue. She forgot about it for years, but from very young, she was very passionate about art and was particularly drawn towards certain works (she loved [name inaudible]). When she was a young teenager, she went to one of his gallery openings and was able to tell him the story of her trip to Chios as a child and he was

obsessed with this story and he invited her back to his studio and asked her to urinate for him. He tasted it and then peed blue. So the story goes, this was the birth of the idea of his infamous gallery opening where everyone was offered a cocktail and it wasn't until they all went home that the audience that had been invited to the gallery discovered that they also peed blue (Triscott 2012).

K-130: My obsession with art started when I was a kid. At that time, I was not able to recognise that my fascination was, like, a result of infection. I remember the most beautiful vacation in my life when I found a blue tree and a blue caterpillar on it. I was always really into things being rejected, being awful, being not acceptable. That is why, even feeling a bit disgusted, I ate the caterpillar (Kristeva 1982). Nothing bad happened at that time. I did not feel sick.

AN: The caterpillar (laughs), let's imagine that I also had that caterpillar. I can't tell you if my pee was blue or not. In 2019, I had my operation and finally I would be able to see it. Was I enchanted? Definitely. Was I scared? Oh yeah. Was it blue? Yeah, but blue was the color of contagious that night too (Ingvaldsen, Leegaard, Kravdal, and Mørk 2020; Wilkes, and Nagalli 2020). And maybe I wished I didn't see. I cursed myself for some time that maybe I was so keen to bring people together, maybe I was so keen to see it myself that I had actually contributed to the dissemination of the disease.

SC: And when we were all thinking of inviting the same artist, the artist Ruby, to exhibit this *Blue Tree* - that we understood that we had met before.

AV: There is lots of mythology around this tree because it has this amazing, unbelievable bluish essence around it so when you come into the space you see that something is different, but you can see exactly what it is. And the artist who brought this to all of us, he told us a lot of these kind of stories when he was presenting the artwork. She told us, in one of the meetings, this incredibly amazing story about this special space - the island - where gravity is different from all other places around the world. This kind of like, very special geologic rarity. The phenomena is that because of these different gravitational forces, the light has different possibilities, and that is where the bluish light is coming from (Scientific American 2020).

K-130: I started to work for the Museum of Modern Art actually one year before that first *Staying in Touch* exhibition. It was a challenge; I was really excited. I was excited because it was the first exhibition without an exhibited object. It was just about a tree, the tree which was a kind of biofact (Karyffalis 2008) because, of course, it was not created; it was something that was just derived from reality. Actually, we have been working really hard with the rest of my team, carrying - every day - water and soil for the tree, so we were sweating a lot. We did not recognise that we were sweating blue.

VL: It is even rumoured that Yann Marussich - who famously performed a piece where his sweat was blue (Marussich 2007) - it is said that he hails from a long line of descendants of Chios. The

artist, Marta de Menezes, her mother is also an artist and she is said to have attended one of the gallery openings and ever since then she has been obsessed with butterflies - painted butterflies continuously. This was said to have inspired Marta de Menezes' own butterfly work (de Menezes 1999). So obviously when we received a proposal from the artist to bring *Blue Tree* to MOMA, I couldn't refuse, we were delighted.

K-130: A few days after the opening, people visiting the exhibition realised that they were sweating blue. That was the moment when the pandemic started. We did not know that there was something in common - each of the workers visited the same space and time in childhood - and everybody started to be fascinated in art. We met randomly, or maybe not randomly, curating this exhibition. Nobody actually judged us that we caused the pandemic somehow but the kind of punishment which we got was being responsible (Haraway 1988) for the different exhibitions from the same series. That is why we also prepared the second *Staying in Touch* exhibition, getting a lot of improvement, getting a lot of body extensions, helping us in curating and we also got transformed, so right now we are approaching a new era, a new era in history of art and a new era in curating.

## What effect did the pandemic have on the curatorial work of art events?

AN: I'm sure my colleagues can tell you more about the effects of the pandemic in the curatorial work. On my behalf I almost had to lie. I mean to promise that we knew exactly what we were doing, that it was absolutely safe and absolutely remarkable (Nerlich, and Halliday 2007).

AV: It's a very important question, because the effect the pandemic had on the curatorial work of all of our departments together is very, very present. It's not only in our place, but in other spaces where I collaborate, and of course we have problems in art - who knows what the after-effects will be? For so long, there was much terrifying news coming out - devastating - about what the main reason could be and that we cannot function anymore, like we had been. Also, one of the strange reasons could be our space? That we are the ones who are guilty. Now they try to throw the guilt at art, which I think is just like... who knew that people could think like that?

SC: The wearables I designed for the 2019 exhibition were offered to the public to experience the show more in depth and to make love with what's visible and invisible in the art space; but they were also offered as anti-viral contamination devices. As a team we had foreseen the possible viral breakout. Though, the wearables protocol I designed was not obligatory and this resulted in the spread out of the pandemic. Paradoxically, our exhibition became famous in the entire world. We decided to continue with the exhibition and do the

second version in 2029, back then when the planet as we knew it in the '80s had already changed, that's when I made the *Diadem Headset* (Bitbrain 2018).

K-130: The pandemic changed the way of thinking about art in a fundamental way. We realised that it is not the matter of objects anymore. It is rather the matter of the performative process happening around. And we also realised that safety is not something necessary, friction is more useful. So actually, it caused a general development in the art area.

AV: It happens often that what starts out as a vision or idea becomes a sense of reality. The reality we changed... and we can't go back.

AN: Things just didn't make sense. Everybody seemed to be promising that reality was different when we would go back to normality. There is no new normal. There is no old normal. First of all, there is no normal. But how can you explain this in a press release? The only thing you can explain in a press release is that you can't shut down art. So, the pandemic made art curating even more activist. We had to fight to open the art spaces (Koteyko, Brown, and Crawford 2008; Larson, Nerlich, and Wallis 2005; Briggs, and Hallin 2007).

VL: So immediately after the pandemic, a lot of galleries started to erect screens, hand sanitisers at the entrances, even some rather elaborate and very expensive ventilation systems which mimicked biohazard safety level 2 (World Health Organization 2004), where the air on entrance to a space, the air is very rapidly sucked upwards and downwards into grills thus helping to ensure that the air inside the space is clear in relation to the air outside of the space. I decided to take a different approach.

K-130: Also, it changed the connection between art and reality. We started to be focused, especially myself, on transformation, on the connection, on relations. We realised that we don't need to be on the border between art and not art. We started to think about senses, what kind of perception would be the best - fitted in the best way to everything that is happening right now.

AN: We had to become experts in bioterror. Experts in biosecurity. Experts in biotechnology. Experts in anything that could allow us to be prepared to guarantee a sense of psychological and physical security and to guarantee that transcendence, that is required to feel, when you come together in an art space (Vázquez-Espinosa, Laganà, and Vázquez 2020).

VL: So yeah, as part of the curatorial strategy, I actively try to encourage multispecies touch to enable multispecies transmission but at a safe and manageable rate, you know - small elements - so looking at the transformative potential of mud and sea water (Basilla 2018) and certain plant species that would be able to allow us to naturally develop tolerances (Dilston Physic Garden 2020; The Alnwick Garden 2020). So I stripped the gallery floors back to bare earth (Bradley 2014), that was standard practice and made gallery spaces a hybrid between the indoors and the outdoors as

much as possible (Dornob 2020; Morby 2017; Ravenscroft 2019). I didn't see weather as a problem, I saw weather as something that had to be considered as part of the artwork. I moved many events outdoors completely. That started to happen more and more, it was inevitable with the climate anyway. We even took over an airport for a performance, that was a really interesting experience. It wasn't long after the original pandemic that I reached out to the Lo-Tek architectural movement (Watson 2019) to start to develop ways in which we could grow future gallery spaces. The first of those are starting to come to fruition now, we have the Amphigalleries which are based on the works of architectural based practices such as those of Charles Jencks (Jencks 2003-2010) and Maya Lin (Lin 1995, 2009) who work with landforms to shape space, and in the early 2020s I started working with scientists to develop a form of osmotic skin that responds to airborne entities (Wentzel 2017), with my colleagues at MOMA in other curatorial departments we were looking at ways in which we could use this for the body but also in an architectural context (Okssiuta 2003; Yi 2019; Lohmann 2013).

AV: The artist – she has so many problems, he could not work on that, it is so hard to be the main reason for the global pandemic, I cannot imagine to be in this kind of position. And all our departments, we all had been working together very strongly, especially when it comes out of this rumour about the presence of something like this in our space.

SC: Sorry, I need to take a moment I can't continue with this, with this in me anymore. As a matter of fact, Ruby, the artist, did know that the snack that she brought will activate the bioflora in our stomach to generate the blue viral outbreak effect and so did I. As a matter of fact, when we met in Greece there was chemistry between me and Ruby, and he invited me to go to the beach. And on the beach we were recruited by a bio-terrorist group and ever since underwent a life training. So, the 2019 outburst was actually planned (ET Online 2020). But, of course, we made a mistake, because the idea was to erase the human from the surface of the earth but instead what we produced was centralised control (Foucault 2008). After she disappeared, after her/his career was destroyed, I felt lonely and guilty and that gave me the strength to leave the anarchist bio-terrorist group and enter Plank 55 - where I'm living now and where it feels home. Sorry I need to take a minute.

K-130: Paradoxically, this pandemic is the best thing which could happen to us. Yes, it is strongly provocative to say something like that, but we need to be a bit provocative in the area of art. We need to ask questions; we need to get the connection to understand others. We need to realise that the tree and ourselves, this is the universe. This is a kind of being many (Haraway 2008), this is a kind of intra-action (Barad 2012). So, what was the moment of crisis for society at the same moment was the breaking point for the area of art.

## And what do you think is the impact of the vaccine now that you are preparing *Staying in Touch III*?

AN: Well we had to wait two decades for the vaccine, many things changed. The way we relate to each other changed and now they are going to change again. Does it work? Is it so good? Can you guarantee? Are there any contra-effects? It took us so long, I guess I'll have to rethink.

K-130: Yes, vaccine, the vaccine, it was also something crucial - as, actually, the pandemic was. Firstly, everybody thought about a regular vaccination, so every possible scientist, every possible biologist started to work on a recipe for the cure. We were observing that, being partly involved because of our being infected, but scientists at the same moment realised that the vaccine is not enough, it is not successful to just make some injections.

VL: Well, obviously the virus and the vaccine have revolutionised the way I work. I am part of some things which it is slightly difficult to talk about now, but... I can say that MAG: the Multispecies Aesthetic Group? I'm in discussions with them to develop a new model which moves beyond the gallery entirely to bringing art experience into the wider environment more generally. The Multi-species Aesthetic Group aims to consider the idea of aesthetics not only across environments but across species in a much broader and more comprehensive way than I think has ever been tackled before, so art not only becomes a part of the workplace, it becomes a part of the home, it becomes a part of the infrastructure of a city, it becomes part of the environment in an all-encompassing and really comprehensive way (Artist Placement Group, n.d.).

SC: Now, 2039, here in Plank 55 we have officially despised the vaccination to avoid chip implants (Anthonisen 2020) and also because we believe that is something conservative, as it insists in our 3-dimensional bodily reality.

AV: In 2029 that was a challenge. How do we bring people into the space, when we do not know how this is transmitted? So, we have to take care that it is not possible to get through air, through touch, through smell – through all these different kinds of body sensorium perceptions. You know, at the end of the day, when they came out with this story of the beginning of the whole global pandemic in our little gallery space, which paradoxically - or maybe we could even say ironically - that we called, *Staying in Touch* in 2019 - was very challenging. I have to say that I'm just so pleased that all of the departments agreed that we would do another exhibition 2049. I think is great to see how we can navigate these previous 2019 visions - implement all that we learned in between and do something extraordinary in 2049.

AN: Each person that visited *Staying in Touch* in its two previous versions has a different story, so I'm planning to promote the individual experience. I'm planning to collect the personal stories of our

audience, of our public, of our visitors and to make them part of this long line already. Thirty years - it will be - telling the story which started before the pandemic, went all through it and finally it's free of it, free! How do you promote when you have freedom?

VL: And I'm really excited to say that I am now working closely with genetic variation activists Lulu and Nana (Musunuru 2019). Back in 2035 when we formed the International Multispecies Aesthetic Group Evolution (IMAGE) – and we've been working since then to promote genetic diversity and variation through art projects. Obviously, Adam Zaretsky is one of IMAGE's most well-known collaborators (Zaretsky 2020).

K-130: We don't need to be vaccinated; it is enough to be connected on a proper level. Nobody and nothing is strange right now. This connection is the most beautiful thing, so we realised that thanks to that scientific discovery that the area of art needs to be transformed as well. That is why science and art got transformed to be connected and inseparable. What happened in the area of science happened at the same time in the area of art. It produced the current situation. The optimal situation? I am not able to say. I am not able to predict because we are transforming everything, right now and every day. The tree has been transformed as well so it is not a start of infection anymore. Our touch right now is not dangerous. Touch has been transformed to be the basis of the cure. I am a kind of a vector - I am hugging people, giving them also the possibility to hug each other, creating art thanks to that.

AV: In one way I think it is very poetic. Staying in Touch is changing exactly this: 'touch'. For 2049, the Department of Art-Intra-Action is working also on how to recalibrate experience. This means we try to hack our neural systems. For humans and non-humans, because we think that exhibitions are for everybody, it's the same for forests and oceans, we are all exchanging our different environments (Uexkull 2014).

SC: For the 2049 Staying in Touch exhibition, I'm very busy designing the Quantum Ovum un-embodied consciousness apparatus that will be placed at the entrance of the art show. The public will enter it to be suspended in a chewy matter, while their toes are connected to the neural umbilical roots (Davis 2019; Horn 2020; Wachowski, and Wachowski 1999). This system will supply a breath that will shut down their vision and will entangle, read, codify, disintegrate and dematerialise their bodies, while their consciousness will be tele-transported to the map web of the art show (Hall 2018). Here the mind of the art show guide, whose body will be previously disintegrated, will wait for them to conduct the exhibition tour. The codified bodies are stored as giga-bytes in the art show quantum computers. At the end of the show the process is reversed. A second breath is provided by the umbilical roots, coding the bodies back by reassembling their particles and reincarnating their consciousness, if everything goes well.

AV: The new exhibitions will help us to see, to learn, to understand how to be changed and transformed through diligent, diverse practice

of the view that is left with experiencing the different levels of our culture.

## Do you think art is essential?

VL: Well the future of MOMA moves entirely beyond the gallery as formal space. Working with the other departments we have some really exciting new developments which will take the viewing of art to a level never before experienced. People will still come together, to visit MOMA, but the gallery no longer really exists. The future of art is pure experience.

K-130: If art is essential...? Yes, I would say it is, but like everything else used to be. I think right now we are facing the moment when art and reality are perfectly matched. I am an artist, I am a curator, I am a vector, I am also a transgenic organism. So yes, art is essential for myself because it is a part of myself. But it is also essential for the tree being presented and being not presented anymore. Right now, it is enough to feel the connection with the tree, we don't need an object anymore. You are asking me if it means that art is dead. Well, maybe, actually I would say it is - but it is not a big deal.

AV: Art is definitely one of the essentials. Let's live in the new world, of a human and non-human neurological condition in which one or more sensorium modalities will be exchanged, shaped, reshaped and used for better good, for each other.

K-130: The moment of creation is actually here the moment of decision. You need to decide that you want to be transformed and you are ready for that, and if you are, let me hug you. My goal is just to improve the way of connection and the quality of the connection. Don't think too much about art, which is dead, move forward.

AN: If art is essential? Honestly? I would rather die than live in a world where art spaces are closed. So, you bet it is. It is essential to me!

VL: Art is everything.

SC: [Note: The interview with Soladite Carnelian was interrupted abruptly at this point and she enters what can be perceived as an altered state of mind. She utilises some of her devices to undergo what would be her exile ritual from Plank 55 (maybe to reach a new condition half human/animal, as shown in her snake eye closing this documentary). Wearing her anti-body recognition camouflaging suit, she then disappears from the camera. Apparently, she has escaped from under the earth and her location is still unknown.]

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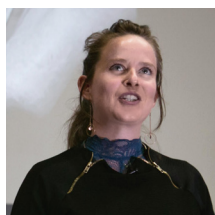
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## CV

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Artist and filmmaker

Isabel Burr Raty (BE/CL) is an artist and filmmaker working between Brussels and Amsterdam. She is interested in exploring the interstices between the organic and the artificial, between the unlicensed knowledge of minority groups and the dominant narratives. She teaches Media Art History in École de Recherche Graphique, is researcher in Nadine-WAB V Brussels, and invited jury member in Autonomous Design Master KASK Gent in 2019-2020. In 2018-2019 she obtained the bio-art/design AFK 3 Package-Deal Grant, which partnered her to Waag and Mediamatic Amsterdam. Her artworks intertwine live art and new media installations, inviting audiences to queer fixed categories of production understandings, and to experience the benefits of embodying SF in real time, such as the Beauty Kit Female Farm. Her works and collaborations have been shown internationally, ie: Palais de Tokyo Paris, Royal Flemish Theater, ISEA Hong Kong, Eco-Futures London. With the support of Media fund, Isabel is developing her second film, exposing the impact of colonialism on Easter Island's Rapa Nui people. *Website:* <https://www.isabel-burr-raty.com/>

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Louise Mackenzie is an artist working across contemporary visual art practice, new media (bio) art, film and sound. Her research explores the more-than-human concept of lively material through process-based and participatory art practice and feminist science studies. She is a member of the Cultural Negotiation of Science research group, Northumbria University, an Associate of the Institute of Genetic Medicine, Newcastle University and holds a PhD in Fine Art from BxNU, a BALTIC CCA and Northumbria University partnership. Louise has spoken at RE:SOUND 2019, Denmark, TransImage2018 Edinburgh, ISEA2017 Colombia, ISEA2016 Hong Kong, Leonardo LASER London and Sonic Environments 2016 Brisbane. Her works have been exhibited at Pomona Museum of Art (USA), Unhallowed Arts (Australia), Charles Darwin House (London), the National Library of Spain (Madrid), Lumiere (Durham), Summerhall (Edinburgh), BALTIC CCA and BALTIC39 (Newcastle), Bond House (London), Basement 6 Collective (Shanghai) and National Taiwan University of the Arts (Taiwan).

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**Robertina Šebjanič**

Independent artist

Robertina Šebjanič (SI), based in Ljubljana, is an internationally exhibited and awarded artist. Her art-research focus has for several years been centred around cultural, (bio)political, chemical and biological realities of aquatic environments, which serves as a starting point to investigate and tackle the philosophical questions on the intersection of art, technology and science. Her ideas and concepts are often realised in collaboration with others, through interdisciplinary and informal integration in her work. She was awarded with Honorary Mention at Prix Ars Electronica 2016, a STARTS2016 nomination and a nomination for the White Aphroid award. Robertina was SHAPE platform 2017 artist. She has been resident artist / researcher: 2018 at Ars Electronica (EMARE / EMAP), 2019 at RV Celtic Explorer in frame of the Aerial/Sparks project, Galway 2020. Her work of art Aurelia 1+Hz / proto viva generator (artist proof) has since 2019 been part of the BEEP Electronic Art Collection, Spain.

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## CV



**Karolina Żyniewicz**  
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Karolina Żyniewicz is an artist (2009 graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Łódź, Department of Visual Arts) and researcher, PhD student (Nature-Culture Transdisciplinary PhD Program at Artes Liberales Faculty, University of Warsaw). Working in a laboratory (mostly at the Institute of Genetics and Biotechnology, Faculty of Biology, University of Warsaw) locates her works in the field of bio art, although she tries to avoid using this term. She sees her liminal activity as situated knowledge production. She is mostly focused on life in its broad understanding (its biological and cultural meaning). Her projects have mostly conceptual, critical character. The main point of her PhD research interest are multilevel relations emerging during realisation of liminal projects. She tries to put her observations, as an artist/researcher (liminal being), in the context of Science and Technology Studies (STS) Actor-Network Theory by Bruno Latour and feminist humanities.

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