



Jasmina Založnik
Sledi v opustošeni krajini /
Footprints in a Desolate Landscape

ob razstavi Marka Batiste: *Stekleno nebo / Vitreous Sky*

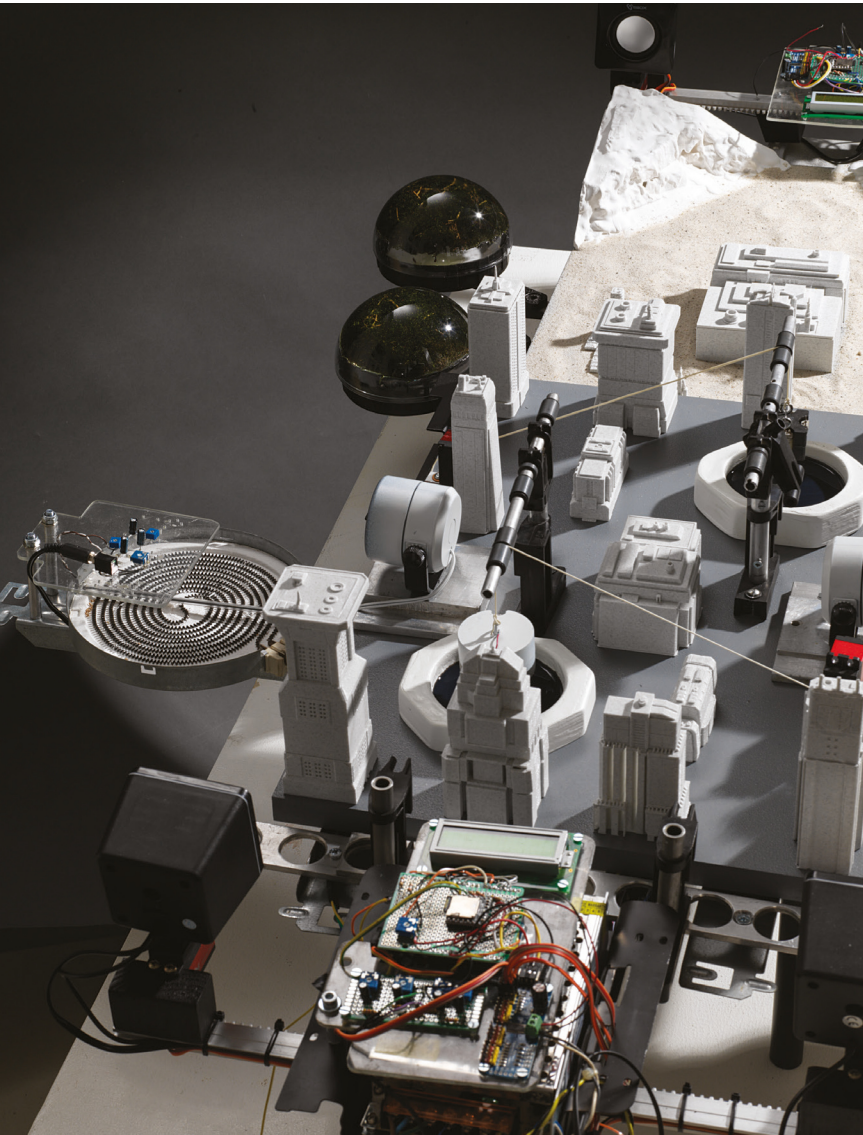
STAKLENIK



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Sledi v opustošeni krajini

*Spremno besedilo ob razstavi večkanalne zvočne
instalacije Stekleno nebo Marka Batista*

○ RAZSTAVI



Večkanalna zvočna instalacija *Stekleno nebo* intermedijskega umetnika Marka Batiste je nadaljevanje svojevrstnega umetniškega premišljevanja in raziskovanja sodobne postfaktične družbe v odnosu do tehnološkega napredka ali, preprosto, relacij znotraj trikotnika človek – narava – tehnologija, ki jih avtor premišljuje v kontekstu ekokritičnega diskurza, okoljskih politik ter drugih aktualnih humanističnih konceptov (narava, antropocen-trizem, kolonialna kapitalistična matrica ipd.). Gre za svojevrstno nadaljevanje premislekov, zastavljenih v projektu *Fluidni delci vulkanskega pepela* (Galerija 001, 2017), z apokaliptično tematiko, v kateri obiskovalcu, kljub odsotnosti človeka, jasno predoči njegovo prisotnost, globinski odtis na obličju planeta še dolgo po njegovem izumrtju.

V središču tokratne instalacije *Stekleno nebo* sta precizno izdelana interaktivna, hibridna, vizualno-zvočna objekta – prototipa distopičnega habitata naših prihodnosti, s katerima avtor tematizira projekt na dveh, med seboj prepletenih ravneh; tj. na simbolni in praktični ravni umetniškega prikaza. Večkanalna zvočna instalacija je sestavljena iz vizualnega in zvočnega dela. Vizualni del tvori dvodelna, s 3D printerjem ustvarjena mimetična instalacija urbanega in ruralnega habitata, s katero umetnik ponazori navideznost njune razdvojenosti. Marko Batista se namreč zelo dobro zaveda spoja, vpliva in soodvisnosti vseh elementov danega sistema, saj so prav mreže središče njegovega umetniškega opusa. Zvočni del instalacije je zasnovan procesno, s pomočjo elektrolize toksičnih spojin, ki v razširjenem elektronskem sistemu v procesu samo-oscilacije in ekstrakcije proizvajajo zvočno sliko. S postavitvijo materije v središče prenese nanjo tudi zastopništvo, kar daje delu za Batisto značilno odprtost, tj. neposredno spremljanje njegovega postajanja, s čimer se vzpostavlja tudi prostor presenečenja. Marku Batisti tako ne gre zgolj za razmišljanje o, temveč vselej za premišljevanje z (izbranimi elementi oziroma materijami in materialnostmi njegovih instalacij), kar mu omogoča odklop od moralizma in vstop v odprte, vselej fluidne in spremenljive prostore, nad katerimi niti avtor sam nima popolnega nadzora.

UMETNIKOVE STRATEGIJE IN PRISTOPI



Preden poskušam razprostrti nekatere možne implicitne nastavke spojev in odnosov v trikotniku človek – narava – tehnologija, velja predstaviti nekaj ključnih elementov v avtorjevem opusu in izpostaviti vsaj peščico njegovih umetniških strategij.

Tehnologija je ključna komponenta dela Marka Batiste. Umetnik jo razume v izjemno širokem in razvejanem pomenskem polju. V njegovem delu se ne pojavlja zgolj kot sestavni del materializiranih zvočnih instrumentov in sistemov, temveč tudi na bolj abstraktni ravni, s posredno materialnostjo skozi vsebino in v strukturiranju *produkcije védenosti* (M. Foucault). Batista namreč zanimajo procesi institucionalizacije védenja – ideologija_e in njeno_ihovo (uspešno) tvorjenje matrice, iz katere opazujemo svet, ga razumemo in v njem nenazadnje delujemo. Z materialne, tehnične plati pa z njo operira tudi in predvsem s konstrukcijo in izdelavo nosilcev (zvočnih) informacij bodisi (še) neobstoječih instrumentov ali kompleksnih zvočnih sistemov, pri čemer vztrajno sledi načelom »naredi sam« (DIY).

Kritični spopad s tehnologijo se v njegovem delu kaže v dekonstruiranju, demitologizaciji in demistifikaciji tehnologije na obeh izpostavljenih ravneh, hkrati pa razvija prepoznavno umetniško strategijo in zavestno težnjo prekinjanja ustrojnih povezav (*delinking*). V svojih delih odpira množstvo (tudi nasprotujočih si) pozicij in relacij in poskuša na ta način razkriti predvsem slabše razvidne povezave med izbranimi elementi, ki stopajo v ospredje prav v procesualnosti kot temeljni značilnosti njegovih modularnih zvočnih instalacij in performansov.

Batista je materialist, pri čemer materialnost podobno kot tehnologijo razume tudi z zajetjem njenih navidezno nematerialnih delov. Povedano drugače, »materialna dejanskost je le odskočna deska za skok v abstrakcijo in vizualnost, v področja, ki se razumejo kot manj fizična.«¹ Tehnološka orodja, na primer, so zgolj novi objekti, sestavljeni in ustvarjeni iz zemeljskih materialov, ki jih je mogoče in treba gledati in razumeti predvsem kot skupek njihovih sestavnih elementov.

Razumevanje posamičnih elementov ter njihovega mesta v mreži odnosov, v katere so potopljeni, omogoči razumevanje konstituiranja hiperobjektov² ter posledic številnih nevarnih povezav njihovega namernega abstrahiranja in abstrakcije.

»Materialnost kaže na vrtoglavo kompleksnost in prepletenost različnih dejavnikov v digitalni dobi, v kateri je 'material', tako kot zvok ali jezik, lahko tudi nekaj, kar ni fizično, ampak posledica neprestanega izvajanja.«³ Zavestno ustvarjene situacije, v katerih je zvok obravnavan kot fenomen in material, so prepoznavne značilnosti umetniškega opusa Marka Batiste zadnjega desetletja.⁴ Tako kot v tokratnem projektu se avtor v zvočnih raziskovanjih posveča proizvodnji zvoka v mehaničnih in kemičnih procesih, ki jih z vzpostavljanjem nestatičnih habitatov (prvenstveno v proizvodnji zvočnih slik, pogosto pa tudi svetlobe in vizualne vizure) vselej premisli tudi na prostorski ravni. Poganja jih predvsem njegova osredotočenost na variabilnosti in spremenljivosti materij v njihovi rizomatski povezanosti,⁵ iz katere vznikata in se vzpostavlja amorfno-akustični kaos, ki omogoča obiskovalcu intenzivno fizično izkušnjo. Kompleksna in vibrajouča mreža povezav ter podeljeno zastopništvo (agency) materiji umetnika osvobajata njegove posredniške vloge v popolnosti nadzora, s čimer razpira prostor singularnemu *postajanju*. Navsezadnje je prav singularnost postajanja ena ključnih lastnosti Markovega, k eksperimentalnosti usmerjenega umetniškega ustvarjanja. Njegov sestop iz performansa v polje intermedijskih zvočnih instalacij je mogoče razumeti prav v odkritju možnosti ustvarjanja spremenljivih in dinamičnih prostorov, kar gre nedvomno pripisati tudi njegovemu izjemno kompleksnemu poznavanju in razumevanju naravoslovnih (kemije, fizike, nanotehnologije, biologije ipd.) in tehničnih znanosti (mehanike, elektronika, akustika idr.).

ČLOVEŠTVO – NARAVA – TEHNOLOGIJA

Zdi se, da bo svetovno prebivalstvo s trenutnih sedem milijard do leta 2040 naraslo na skoraj devet milijard, število potrošnikov srednjega razreda pa se bo v naslednjih 20 letih povečalo za tri milijarde, kar pomeni, da se bo tudi povpraševanje po virih eksponentno povečalo. Do leta 2030 bo svet potreboval vsaj 50 odstotkov več hrane, 45 odstotkov več energije in 30 odstotkov več vode, ne glede na to, da postajajo vse bolj očitne številne nove meje »ponudbe« okolja oziroma našega planeta.⁶

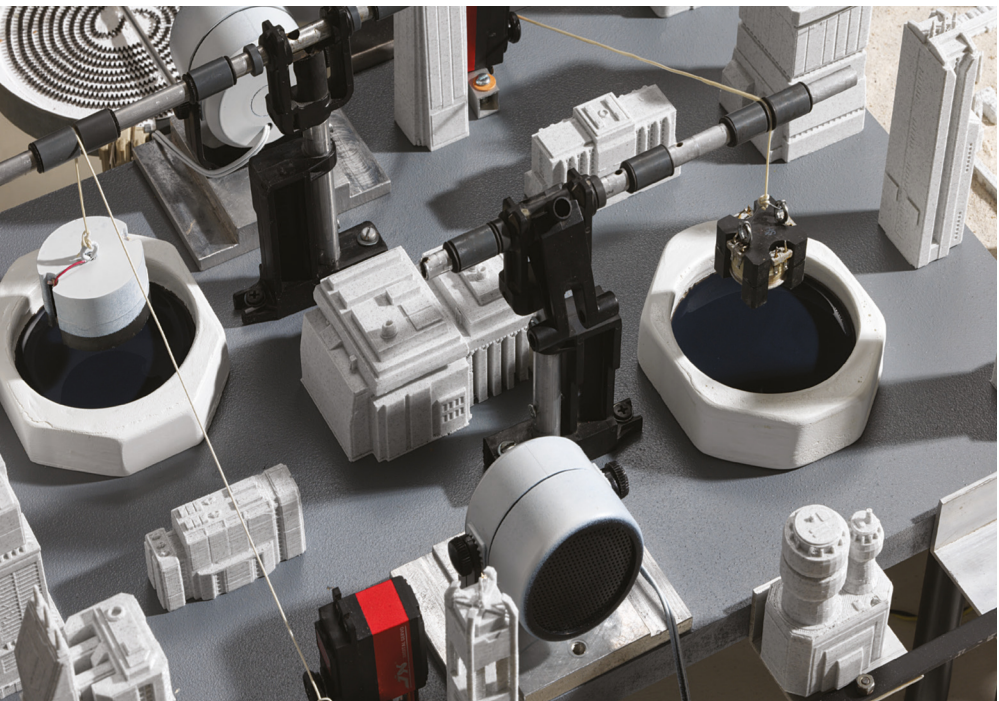
Iz vzpostavljene geološke epohe je razviden negativni vpliv človeštva na planet do te mere, da se bo njegov odtis v geoloških plasteh ohranjal še milijone let, zaostreni geološki koncept antropocena pa predvideva tudi projekcijo prihodnjega izumrtja človeka.⁷

Kot je razvidno iz zgoraj zapisanega, je planetarna situacija do te mere nevzdržna, da ji lahko sledi zgolj izumrtje človeka. Ta ne povsem določen prihodnjik spominja na najbolj distopično znanstveno fantastiko in je hkrati mesto, v katerega s svojim delom *Stekleno nebo* vstopa Marko Batista. In čeprav je iz vzpostavljene naracije človeštvo (že) izključeno, umetnika zanima predzgodba, tj. čas zemeljskega obstoja človeštva in posledice njegovih ravnanj.

Odločitev za dualistični vizualni prikaz postapokaliptičnega sveta (urbanega in ruralnega habitata) je namerna, saj družbeni subjekt prav z delitvijo in ločevanjem ustvarja iluzijo sveta. Takšen prikaz odpre ključna vprašanja, z njimi vstop v proces analize in ob nazornem spoju obeh habitatov po vzročno-posledičnem principu vplivanja, soodvisnosti in pogojenosti omogoči prestop iz ustrojenih načinov védenja.

Da bi dihotomijo razumeli, je treba najprej izrisati postopek udejanjanja modela mišljenja – matrice, v katero smo ujeti –, ter osvetliti razloge navidezne apatije do okoljevarstvene problematike, ki se kaže predvsem v ohranjanju obstoječih vzorcev vsakdanjega življenja. Ni namreč presenetljivo, kot ugotavlja ameriški profesor, specialist okoljevarstvenih humanističnih študij in teorije dekonstrukcije Timothy Clark v uvodu knjižne izdaje *Ecocriticism on the Edge*⁸ (2015), da »ekološka kriza dejansko zares še ne predstavlja neke očitne

in zaznavnetarče zaskrbljenosti⁹ in spremembe utečenih načinov življenja.« Še več, in paradoksalno, bolj kot ekološka katastrofa postaja očitna in očitnejše kot so njene posledice v naših neposrednih in posrednih bližinah, bolj jo – če nas ne zadeva neposredno – odmikamo iz vsakdanjosti. Clark pojasnjuje, da pri tem ne gre za apatijo v obliki brezbržnosti ali zanikanje v preprostem, psihičnem smislu, ampak za umik afekta kot neke vrste obrambo, saj je prav umik navezanosti na ogroženi predmet oblika in način zaščite.¹⁰ Na ta način avtor pojasni in pokaže, da je ekološko zanikanje način obrambe s težnjo po ohranjanju normalizacije našega vsakdana, s čimer ekološko krizo razveže od postfaktične družbe. Če (sploh) kaj, postfaktična družba razdvajanju zgolj naliže dodatno gorivo, razdvajanje samo pa je skupaj s procesi, ki so z njim povezani, treba iskati drugje. Med drugim to z lucidnimi analizami naredijo teoretiki dekolonialnosti, ko z uvedbo pojma kolonialna kapitalistična matrica¹¹ razkrijejo proizvodnjo specifične družbene védenosti, ki je ustrojila moderno zahodno zgodovino in misel.



Koncept kolonialne kapitalistične matrice postavi v središče zahodnega belega človeka in z načelom razdvajanja ustvari širok spekter dualizmov, ki prečijo moderno misel, iz katere se vzpostavljajo principi obstoječega hegemonnega sistema. Izhodišče in izvor te matrice s konceptualizacijo človeka kot rasiziranega in ospoljenega predstavi perujski sociolog in dekolonialni teoretik Ánibal Quijano. Umesti ga v Evropo v čas okoli 15. stoletja, ko so v »novem svetu« vzporedno potekali procesi kolonizacije novih teritorijev, pokristjanjevanja in zaslužnjevanja. Pri pojasnjevanju principov delovanja mehanizmov moči razgrne tudi neposredno povezavo med modernostjo in kolonializmom kot centralnima komponentama kolonialne matrice moči, ki poganja globalni hegemoni sistem. Ni torej naključje, da sta zahodno védenje in mišljenje, ne glede na njuno globalno razširjenost, izpeljana in utemeljena na binarnih opozicijah, dualističnem, strogo rivalskem in podrejevalnem odnosu.

Profesor romanskih kultur in književnosti, semiotik in dekolonialni teoretik Walter D. Mignolo opozori, da omenjeni izum nastane »v imenu odrešitve, s katero so lahko [imperialisti] opravičili svoje zločine.« Kot ugotavlja in pojasnjuje, »[o]d takrat dalje kolonialna matrica moči deluje v dveh simultanih smereh: izgrajevanju same sebe kot civilizacijskega projekta in uničevanju drugih civilizacij. To pomeni utišanje, zavračanje odgovornosti za [Druge] in rasiziranje s širokim naborom oznak, od barbarov do 'primitivnih', od komunistov do teroristov.«¹² Še več, kot bomo natančneje pokazali v nadaljevanju, tovrstno razumevanje pretrga tudi z drugimi odgovornostmi do vsega, kar ne pritiče centralni figuri (belega, moškega itn.) Človeka, torej vsem nečloveškim živim bitjem, naravi, zemlji itn.

Pri zgoščenem prikazu delovanja kategorizacij in razlike se Mignolo naslanja na Quijanov koncept kolonialne matrice moči, iz katerega postane razvidno, da je vzpostavitev navidezno ločenih domen dejansko ena največičastnejših ontoloških fikcij vseh časov. Veličastna je v smislu, kako odlično oblikuje in določa našo resničnost, pa tudi v smislu njene vseprisotnosti, torej globalne razsežnosti.

Shemo delovanja matrice Mignolo plastično oriše z besedami: »Moški/Človek, ki je ustvaril in upravljal kolonialno matrico moči, se je postavil na mesto gospodarja vesolja, tako se mu je uspelo ločiti od drugih moških/ljudi (rasizem), žensk/ljudi(seksizem), narave (humanizem), ne-Evrope (evrocentrizem) ter od 'preteklih' in 'tradicionalnih' civilizacij (modernost). Narava se v domenah kolonialne matrice moči nahaja med domenama gospodarstva in politike; iznašel jo je Moški/Človek v procesu vzpostavljanja samega sebe v lokusu izrekanj (institucij, akterjev in jezikov), ki so ustvarila, preobrazila in upravljala retoriko (narrative) modernosti ter nujno in posledično logiko kolonialnosti. Kdor vlada, ne uboga, je postala glavna predpostavka v naraščajoči afirmaciji sekularnega Ega v zahodni civilizaciji.«¹³

Povedano drugače, za dokončno ustoličenje reda s človekom v središču (humanizem) je bila ključna vzpostavitev ločenih domen, njegova oddvojitve od biotopa, ki je obenem podprla tudi kapitalizem z različnimi oblikami ekstraktivizma. Imperialisti so ta zgodbeni preobrat izvedli z iznajdbo pojma narave. Kot meni Mignolo, »[n]arava ne obstaja ali pa obstaja zgolj kot ontološka fikcija – obstaja zgolj nenehno generiranje in regeneriranje življenja v sončnem sistemu, iz katerega so vzniknile vrste živečih/jezikovajočih organizmov. Omejeni segment teh bitij se je lahko opredelil za ljudi in vsilil svoj samonanašalni opis kot standard za vsa živa bitja iste vrste.«¹⁴

Nadaljevanje procesa lucidno razgrne Quijano, ki vznik rasizma prek ekstraktivizma poveže s kapitalizmom in z rasizacijo narodov, izpeljano iz teritorialne epistemologije. Ta postane v Evropi aktualna s pojavom nacionalnih držav v 19. stoletju in je po Quijanu in Mignolu še nevarnejša. To polje rivalstva namreč še bolj potencira etiketiranje in zatiranje Drugega/-e, kar je jasno razvidno tudi danes v odnosu do in obravnavi vojn ter načinu pozicioniranja z vnosom množstva antagonizmov, s katerimi globalne elite uspešno vladajo svetu.

Tovrstna opažanja sovpadajo tudi z drugim, v humanistiki vse bolj prisotnim pojmom antropocena. Koncept sicer razvijejo atmosferski

znanstveniki kot oznako za geološko epoko po industrijski revoluciji okoli leta 1800. V novejših študijah ekokritičnega diskurza je negativni vpliv človeškega odtisa postavljen še bistveno dlje v preteklost in sega vse do neolitika, v dobo vznika agronomije. To med drugim pokaže že Timothy Morton v kulturni študiji *Dark Ecology*¹⁵, s čimer na zanimiv način poudarek z urbanega prenese na ruralno okolje. S konceptom antropocena postane vloga človeka oz. človeštva odločilna v izčrpavanju zemeljskih dobrin (geologije) ter temeljno zvezana z negativnimi vplivi na planetarno biodiverzitetu. Kritični pa nista zgolj vez in vpliv človeka na okolje (t. i. naravo), temveč še bolj komponentna rast in pogoltnost kapitalističnih apetitov in z njimi spetih ideologij ter neprestana rast populacije, ki ogrožajo celotno planetarno življenje.

»Globalni neoliberalizem pospešuje svoj pohod z izvažanjem demokracije, podkrepjenim z algoritmičnimi protokoli in izpopolnjevanjem logističnega gibanja teles in dobrin.«¹⁶ S povečanim nadzorom gospodarskih in političnih elit nad našimi življenji, nepotešenim osvajanjem in izčrpavanjem dobrin, osvajanjem internetnih in medijskih protokolov ter zlorabo mehanizmov, ki jih ponujata svetovni splet in medijska krajina, postaja družbeni subjekt vse bolj pasiven, v svoji pasivnosti pa nadalje krepi razrast avtoritarnih režimov ter neustavljivih apetitov svetovnih elit. Te si z vsemi močmi prizadevajo, da dualizem ostaja središčni dejavnik, saj prav z njim preprečujejo kakršno koli spremembo našega védenja in nadaljevanje bivanja v podrejanju. Le v duhu razdvajanja je namreč »mogoče narediti človeške dejavnosti tako prodorne in globoke, da lahko tekmujejo z velikimi silami narave in potiskajo Zemljo kot celoto v planetarno *terro incognito*.«¹⁷

Ni torej naključje, da imamo še vedno težave pri opredelitvi pojma narava in jo pogosto mislimo v razliki do kulture, ne glede na to, da lahko v okoljski misli že dolgo prepoznavamo drugačne konceptualizacije. Z njimi poskušajo strokovnjaki pretrgati vezi z razumevanji, ki so se oblikovala znotraj kolonialne kapitalistične

matrice. Ta druga pojmovanja, med katera sodijo *naravakultura* (*natureculture*) ameriške feministične kiborške teoretičarke Donne Haraway, mreža Timothyja Mortona ali *transtelesnost* ameriške raziskovalke okoljske humanistike, znanstvenih študij, novega materializma in materialnega feminizma Stacy Alaimo, poskušajo opozoriti na osupljivo in zapleteno soodvisnost kulture in narave. Človeške kulture so vedno in v celoti del naravnih sistemov izmenjave energij v biosferi in, tako kot katera koli druga entiteta, podrejene zakonom fizike in biologije.

Nedvomno se nahajamo v globoki krizi življenja, pogojeni z razpadanjem biosfere in radikalno neenakostjo življenja kot posledic kolonialno-kapitalističnega nezavednega, ki nadzoruje in oblikuje subjektivnost. Prav to je matrica, kot s premislekom nadaljuje pisanje v svoji zadnji knjigi slovenska filozofinja in dramaturginja Bojana Kunst, »znotraj katere prevladuje reaktivna mikropolitika, tista ki želi konzervirati oblike, znotraj katerih je utelešeno sedanje življenje.«¹⁸ Zato je nujno omenjeno patologijo postaviti v središče, »saj se življenje pokaže šele, ko dovolimo, da nas to, kar je zunanje, prizadene, da se nas dotakne nekaj, kar je izven nas.«¹⁹ Nedvomno Marko Batista to počne zelo uspešno. *Stekleno nebo* je morda krik prebuditve pasiviziranega življenja ali pa upanje, da se bo Zemlja s smrtjo človeka nekoč prebudila v novi svetlejši podobi.

1_Petra Lange-Berndt, »Introduction /How to Be Complicit with Materials.« V: Petra Lange-Berndt (ur.). *Materiality. Documents of Contemporary Art*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015, str. 13.

2_Koncept hiperobjekta uvede profesor Univerze Rice (UK) in predstavnik spekulativnega realizma Timothy B. Morton kot oznako obširnih objektov (klimatske spremembe, internet ali

bolj abstrakten pojem rasizma ipd. lahko umestimo v to pojmovanje), za katere se zdi, da jih le s težavo zapopademo, ne glede na to, da nenehno opažamo njihovo manifestiranje. Hiperobjekti so s svojim pridihom sublimnega strašljivi spreminjevalci igre/matrice, v katero smo potopljeni. Glej Timothy Morton. *Hyperobjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. Minnesota: Minnesota Press, 2013.

3_Karheinz Barck. »Materiality, Materialism, Performance«, v: Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht in Karl Ludwig Pfeifer (ur.). *Materialities of Communication*. Stanford: University Press, 1994.

4_Jurij Krpan. »Paining with Sound.« V: Marko Batista: *Temporary Objects and Hybrid Ambients*. Ljubljana in Slovenj Gradec: Aksioma in Koroška galerija likovnih umetnosti, 2014, str. 20.

5_Na polju humanistike velja med pionirji izgradnje tovrstnega pogleda izpostaviti Gillesa Deleuza in Felixa Guattarija ter njuno kultno delo *Mille Plateaux* [Tisoč platojev].

6_Poročilo Združenih narodov iz leta 2012 o prenaseljenosti Zemlje: www.mercatornet.com/demography/view/10244#sthash.8G3Mv3ml.dpuf

7_Timothy Clark. *The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London, idr.: Bloomsbury, 2015, str. 185.

8_Timothy Clark. *The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London, idr.: Bloomsbury, 2015.

9_Prav tam, str. X.

10_Prav tam, str. 160.

11_Pri opredelitvi kolonialne kapitalistične matrice se naslanjam, povzemam ali prepisujem besedilo, ki sem ga ustvarila v soavtorstvu z Urbanom Belino za gledališki list ob predstavi *Jubilej* (2021), saj se zdi omenjena konceptualizacija ključna za razumevanje prevladujočega razumevanja človeka, narave in tehnologije. Urban Belina in Jasmina Založnik.

»Jubilej kot ceremonial sožitja dediščin sveta.« V: Tery Žeželj (ur.) *Glej List: Jubilej*, Ljubljana: Gledališče Glej, 2021, str. 11–27.

12_Walter D. Mignolo. »Interview – Walter Mignolo/Part2: Key Concepts.« *E-International Relations*. E-IR Publications, 2017. Splet. 16. 2. 2021. <<https://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/21/interview-walter-mignolopart-2-key-concepts/>>.

13_Walter D. Mignolo, Katherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality. Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Duke University Press, 2018, str. 163.

14_Prav tam, str. 158–159.

15_Timothy Morton. *Dark Ecology. For a Logic of Future Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

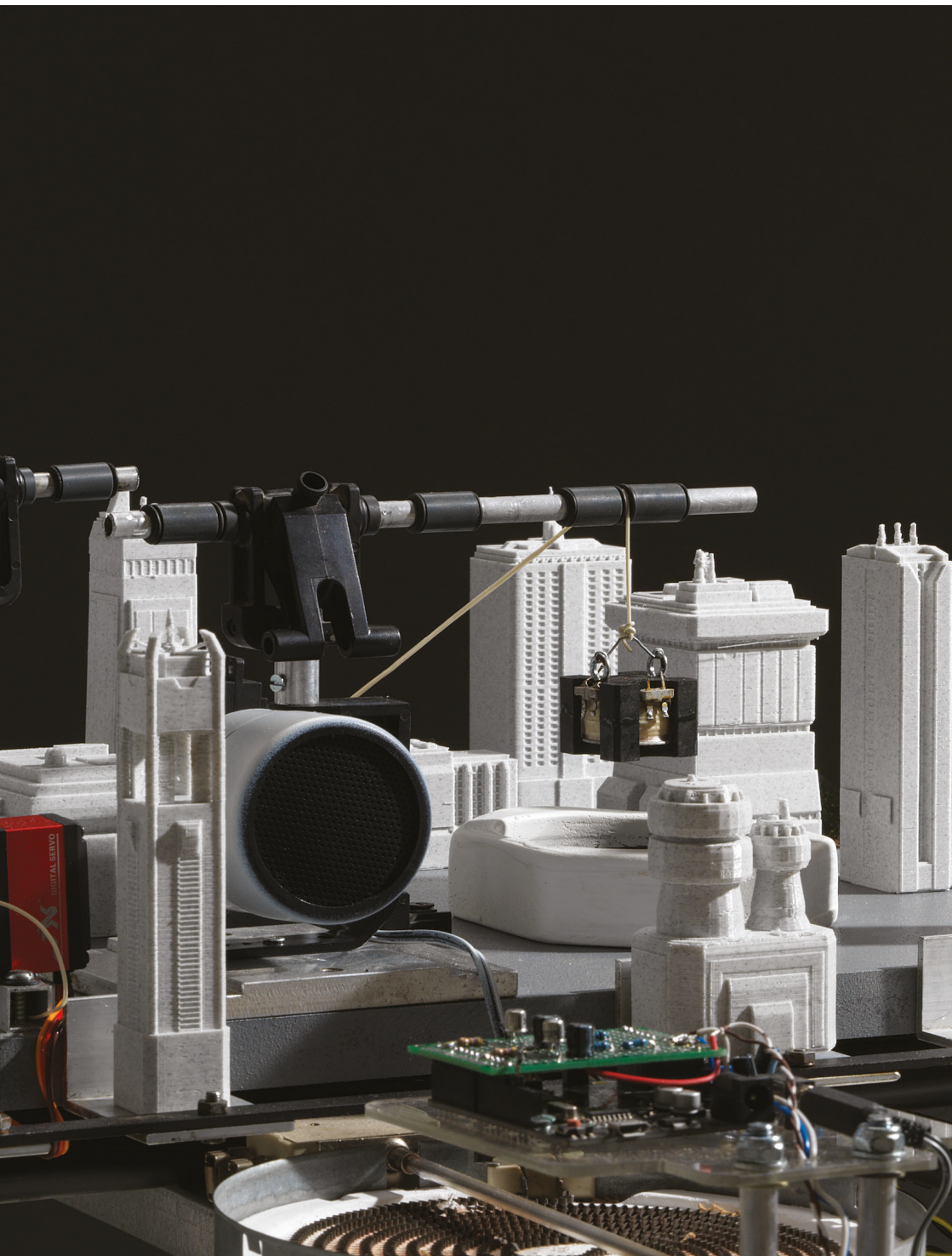
16_Bojana Kunst. *Življenje umetnosti. Prečne črte skrbi*. Ljubljana: Maska, 2021, str. 11.

17_Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen in John R. McNeill, »The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?«, *Ambio* 38 (2007), str. 614–21, Citirano po Timothy Clark. *The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London, idr.: Bloomsbury, 2015, str. 1.

18_Bojana Kunst. *Življenje umetnosti. Prečne črte skrbi*, str. 20.

19_Prav tam, str. 22.







Jasmina Založnik
Footprints In a Desolate Lanscape

Accompanying text to the exhibition of the multi-channel
sound installation *Vitreous Sky* by Marko Batista

THE EXHIBITION



The multi-channel sound installation *Vitreous Sky* by the intermedia artist Marko Batista is a continuation of his unique artistic reflection and exploration of modern post-fact society in the light of technological progress, or, to put it simply, the relations within the human-nature-technology triangle, in the context of ecocritical discourse, environmental policies and pressing humanist concepts (nature, the Anthropocen(trism), the capitalist colonial matrix, etc.). It is somewhat a continuance of the positions formed by the artist in the *Fluid Particles of Volcanic Ash* (Gallery001, 2017). Through the apocalyptic scenario, the viewer – despite the absence of the human – indirectly faces their presence, a deep footprint on the face of the planet long after their extinction.

The *Vitreous Sky* installation revolves around two precisely crafted interactive, hybrid, visual-sound objects – prototypes of a dystopian habitat of our futures, created by the artist to deal with the project on two interrelated levels, i.e., the symbolic and the physical level of artistic representation. This multi-channel sound installation is a visual-and-audio composition. Produced by a 3D printer, the visual part comprises a two-part mimetic installation of the urban and rural habitats that illustrates their apparent division. Indeed, Batista is fully aware of the interlinkage, influence, and interdependence of all elements that constitute a respective system, as in his artworks, he principally explores different networks. The sonic structure of the installation rests on the electrolysis of toxic compounds, which produce a sound within an extended electronic system in the process of self-oscillation and extraction. Its central position gives matter agency, endowing the work with openness in becoming and a room for surprise. Marko Batista does not select the elements, or better yet, matter and materialities of his installations only to explore but always to reflect, which allows him to move away from moralism and enter into open, always fluid, and changing spaces over which even the artist can not exercise complete control.

THE ARTIST'S STRATEGIES AND METHODS

Before I try to unpack some of the possible implicit configurations of the linkages and relations in the human-nature-technology triangle, I would like to introduce some key elements in the artist's body of work and underscore at least a handful of his artistic strategies.

Technology, perceived by the artist in a very extensive and unorthodox way, is a central component of Marko Batista's work. For him, technology is not only an integral part of materialized instruments and sound systems but also operates on a more abstract level, with indirect materiality through content and in the configuration of the *knowledge production* (M. Foucault). Batista is interested in the processes of institutionalization of knowledge – ideology/ideologies and its/their (successful) formation of a matrix that constitutes the basis for our perception of the world, its understanding, and ultimately our acting in it. From the physical, technical perspective, he primarily uses it to design and produce carriers of (audio) information, whether (as yet) non-existent instruments or complex sound systems, while persistently pursuing do-it-yourself methods.

In his work, the critical confrontation with technology is manifested in the deconstruction, demythologization, and demystification of technology on both levels, as well as simultaneous development of distinctive artistic strategy and a conscious tendency to delink the established connections. He opens up a diversity of (also contradictory) positions and relations to unveil primarily the less obvious connections between selected elements, which come to the fore in processuality as a fundamental characteristic of his modular sound installations and performances.

Batista is a materialist, however, his perception of materiality, same as technology, encompasses its, seemingly, non-material components. In other words, "[m]aterial factuality is only a springboard for leaping into abstraction and visuality, realms understood as being less physical."¹ Technological tools, for example, are merely new objects assembled and created of physical materials that can and should be seen and

acknowledged primarily as the sum of their constituent elements. Understanding the individual elements and their place in the mesh of interrelations brings to light the constitution of hiperobjects² and the dangerous consequences of their deliberate abstracting and abstraction.

“Materiality points to the whirling complexity and entanglement of diverse factors in the digital age, in which ‘material’, which like sound or language can now also be something that is not physical, is an effect of an ongoing performance.”³ Planned situations, in which sound is treated as both a phenomenon and a material, are a signature of Marko Batista’s artwork of the last decade.⁴ As is the case with the current project, the artist explores the generation of sound in the mechanical and chemical processes that he, through the creation of unstable habitats (primarily producing sound images but also light and visual compositions) always considers also as to their distribution in terms of space. He is focused on the flux and variation of matter and its rhizomatic connectivity⁵ which materializes in an amorphous-acoustic chaos, delivering the visitor an intense physical experience. The complex and vibrant web of connections and the agency granted to matter free the artist from exercising complete control, thus giving space to singular *becoming*. Indeed, the singularity of becoming is one of the key features of Marko’s experimental art practice. It could have been the possibility of creating changing and dynamic spaces that prompted his ‘pivoting’ from performance to intermedia sound installations, not to mention his complex knowledge and understanding of the natural (chemistry, physics, nanotechnology, biology, etc.) and technical sciences (mechanics, electronics, acoustics, etc.).

HUMANITY – NATURE – TECHNOLOGY

The world's population looks set to grow to nearly nine billion by 2040 from the current seven billion, and the number of middle-class consumers will increase by three billion over the next 20 years, meaning the demand for resources will rise exponentially. By 2030, the world will need at least 50 percent more food, 45 percent more energy and 30 percent more water. How to deal with that in the light of numerous new "supply" limits of the environment, i. e., our planet, which become ever more obvious. 6

As a posited geological epoch in which humanity will have affected the planet to such a degree as still to be visible in the geological strata in millions of years' time, the more strictly geological concept of the Anthropocene entails the chastening projection of future human extinction. 7

To sum up, the planetary situation is untenable to the degree that will inevitably result in human extinction. Reminiscent of the most dystopian science fiction, this not-quite-defined future is also the place into which Marko Batista enters with his work *Vitreous Sky*. And although humanity is (already) excluded from the narrative, the artist is interested in the prologue, i.e., the period of humanity's existence on Earth and the effects of their actions and activities.

The decision to create a dualistic visual representation of the post-apocalyptic world (urban and rural habitat) is deliberate, as it is through division and separation that the social subject constructs the illusion of the world. Such a representation tackles crucial questions and thereof instigates the process of analysis. Explicitly linking the two habitats consequent to the cause-and-effect principle of influence, interdependence, and conditionality allows a detachment from constructed modes of knowledge.

To understand the dichotomy, it is necessary to outline the process of instituting the model of thinking – the matrix in which we are trapped – and pinpoint the reasons for the apparent apathy towards environmental issues, manifested principally in the maintenance of the existing forms of everydaylife. Not surprisingly, as Timothy Clark, the American professor and specialist in environmental humanistic

studies and deconstruction theory, notes in the introduction to the book edition of *Ecocriticism on the Edge*⁸ (2015), the ecologic crisis does not “[...] present any obvious or perceptible target for concern [...]”⁹ or any change in the established ways of life. Moreover, paradoxically, the more climate change becomes evident and the more obvious its consequences in our immediate and indirect proximity, the more - if it does not affect us directly - we withdraw it from everydaylife. According to Clark, we do not deal with apathy in the sense of not caring or denial in the simple, psychological sense, but the withdrawal of affect as a kind of defense. Withdrawing attachment to a threatened object is a form of protection.¹⁰ By identifying the ecological denial as a defense mechanism aimed at sustaining the normality of our everydaylife, the artist detaches ecological crisis from post-fact society. If anything, the post-fact society merely adds fuel to the division, and the division itself, together with the related processes, must be sought elsewhere. Such as the lucid analyses of the theorists of decoloniality and the notion of the (capitalist) colonial matrix of power,¹¹ identifying the production of knowledge that constituted modern Western history and thought.

The concept of the colonial matrix of power places the Western white male at the center and, through division, creates a wide spectrum of dualisms which form the foundations of the existing hegemonic system(s). According to the Peruvian sociologist and decolonial theorist Anibal Quijano, this matrix was mounted and maintained through the conceptualization of a racialized and gendered human. It dates back to Europe around the 15th century, when the “New World” was simultaneously subjected to the processes of colonization, Christianization and enslavement. In explaining the mechanisms of power, he points to the fact that coloniality is constitutive not derivative of modernity, both being central components of the colonial matrix of power that drives the global hegemonic system. It is no coincidence that Western knowledge and thought, however global, were mounted and maintained on binary oppositions, dualist, rival and submissive relations.

Walter D. Mignolo, Professor of Literature and Romance Studies, semiotician and fellow of the collective modernity /coloniality / decoloniality, argues that the coloniality of power was an invention of European imperialists “in the name of salvation to justify their crimes.” Moreover, “[f]rom then on, the colonial matrix of power operates in two simultaneous movements: building itself as a civilizational project and destroying other civilizations. That means, silencing, disavowing, racializing in a vast vocabulary from barbarians, to primitives, from communists to terrorists.”¹² Furthermore, as we will show in more detail below, such hegemonic perception also disavows everything not befitting the central figure (white, male, etc.) Man, i.e., all non-human living beings, nature, earth, etc.



Mignolo draws on Quijano's concept of the colonial matrix of power, from which it becomes clear that the establishment of seemingly separate domains is, in fact, one of the grandest ontological fictions of all time. It is magnificent in the sense of how powerfully it shapes and determines our reality, but also in the sense of its omnipresence, i.e., its (imposed) globality.

Mignolo gives a graphic explanation of how the matrix operates: "This Man/Human who created and managed the [colonial matrix of power], posited himself as master of the universe and succeeded in setting himself apart from other men/humans (racism), from women/humans (sexism), from nature (humanism), from non-Europe (Eurocentrism), and from "past" and "traditional" civilizations (modernity). Nature, in the domains of the colonial matrix of power, lies between the



domains of economics and politics; it was invented by Man/Human in the process of him setting himself up in the locus of the enunciations (institutions, actors, and languages) that created, transformed, and managed the rhetoric (narratives) of modernity, and the necessary and concomitant logic of coloniality. He who governs does not obey, became the assumption in the growing affirmation of the secular Ego in Western civilization."¹³

In other words, the establishment of separate domains, the separation of the human from the biotope, was crucial for the establishment of the human-centered order (humanism), which at the same time supported capitalism in its different forms of extractivism. The imperialists constituted the human through the invention of nature. Mignolo argues that "[n]ature doesn't exist, or it exists as an ontological fiction — what there is the relentless generation and the regeneration of life in the solar system from which processes emerged a species of living/language organisms. A limited sector of these creatures were able to define themselves as human and impose their self-referential description as standard for all living organisms of the same species."¹⁴

The continuation of this process is lucidly explained by Quijano, who, through extractivism, relates the emergence of racism to capitalism and the racialization of nations, sustained by the epistemology of territory. It became relevant in Europe with the formation of nation-states in the 19th century and, according to Quijano and Mignola, it is even more dangerous. This field of competition potentiates even more the discrimination and oppression of the Other. Today, such is evident in the discourse and positioning of the war characterized by many antagonisms that the global elites employ to rule the world successfully.

Subject of increasing attention in humanities, the Anthropocene is a term coined by atmospheric scientists for geological epoch which commenced with the Industrial Revolution around 1800. However, more recent studies of ecocritical discourse place the negative impact of the human footprint wayback in time, the Neolithic and the rise of agriculture. This is supported, among others, by Timothy Morton in

his iconic study *Dark Ecology*,¹⁵ shifting the focus from the urban to the rural environment. With the concept of the Anthropocene, the role of man or humanity becomes decisive in the depletion of the earth's resources (geology) and fundamentally linked to the negative impacts on planetary biodiversity. What is critical is not only the link and the impact of man on the environment (i.e., nature), but even more so the component growth and greed of capitalist appetites and related ideologies, and the constant growth of the population that endanger planetary life.

"Global neoliberalism was accelerating its advance by exporting democracy, underpinned by algorithmic protocols and the refinement of the logistical movement of bodies and commodities."¹⁶ With the increased control of economic and political elites over our lives, the rampant appropriation and depletion of commodities, the control exercised by internet and media protocols, and the abuse of the mechanisms provided by the World Wide Web and the media landscape, the social subject is becoming increasingly passive, and in this passivity further reinforces the rise of authoritarian regimes and the insatiable appetites of the world's elites. They go to extreme lengths to sustain dualism because it is central to undermine any challenge to the dualist perception of knowledge and to maintain life of submission. Indeed, division is vital to making human activities "[so] pervasive and profound that they rival the great forces of nature and are pushing the Earth as a whole into planetary terra incognita'."¹⁷

It is hardly a coincidence that we still have difficulty defining nature and often think of it as distinct from culture although environmental thought has long had in store different conceptualizations construed by professionals to detach from notions that were instituted within the capitalist colonial matrix. These new concepts, including the idea of *natureculture* by the American feminist cyborg scholar Donna Haraway, Timothy Morton's *network*, or *transcorporeality* by the American researcher in environmental humanities, science studies, new materialism, material feminism Stacy Alaimo, draw attention to the

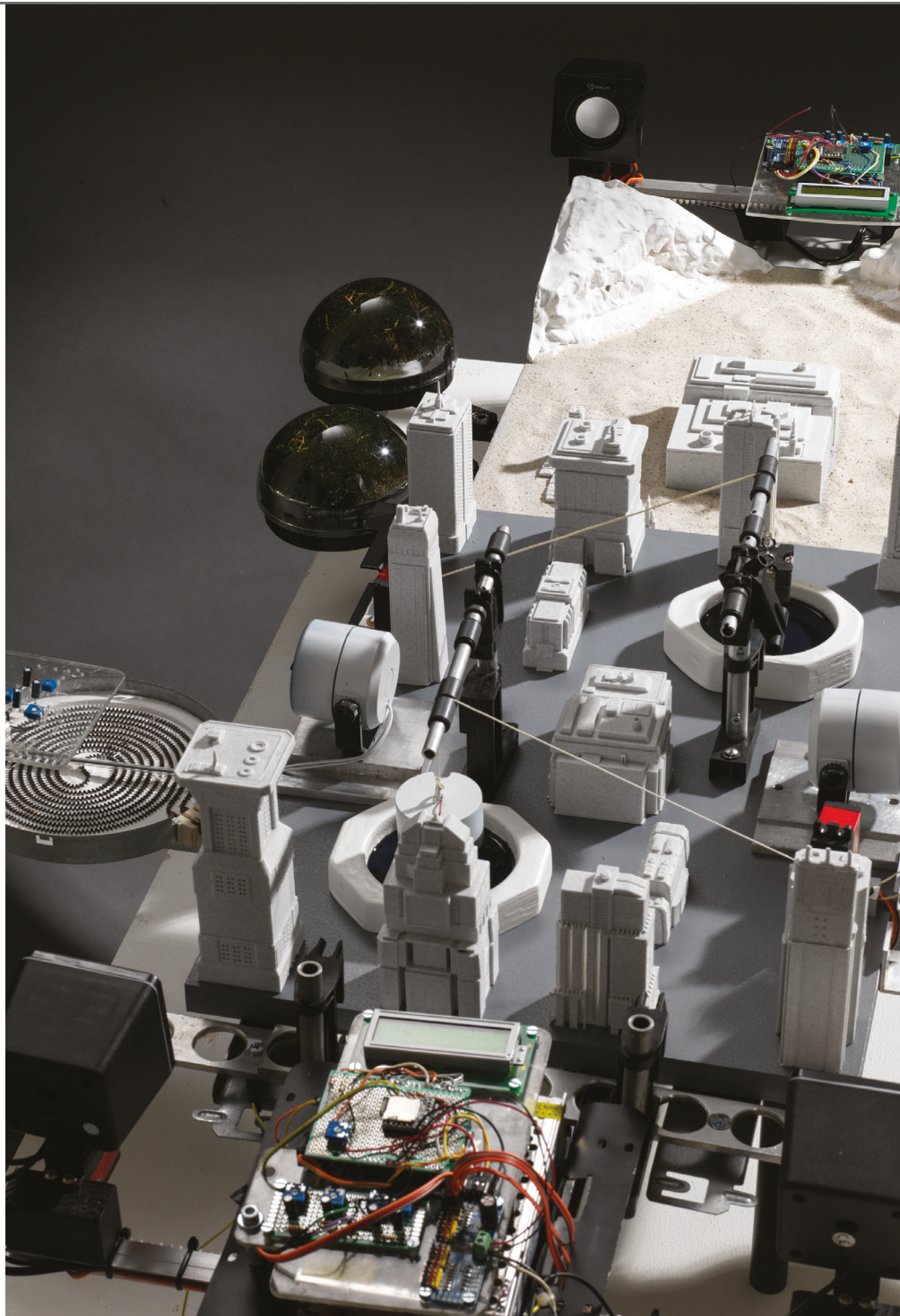
striking and complex interdependence of culture and nature. Human cultures are always and entirely part of the natural systems of energy exchange in the biosphere and, same as any other entity, subject to the laws of physics and biology.

We are undoubtedly in a profound crisis of life, caused by the biosphere degradation and the radical inequality resulting from the colonial-capitalist unconscious that controls and shapes subjectivity. In her latest book, the Slovenian philosopher and dramaturg Bojana Kunst refers to it as a matrix “[within] which a reactive micropolitics prevails, one that seeks to preserve the forms in which current life is embodied.”¹⁸ Hence it is imperative to bring said pathology to light because “[life] is only revealed when we allow ourselves to be affected by what is outside of us, to be touched by something that is outside of ourselves.”¹⁹ Marko Batista is brilliant in accomplishing this objective. The *Vitreous Sky* is perhaps a wake-up call for passivized life, or hope that with the death of a human, the Earth will one day awaken in a new, brighter light.

1_ Petra Lange-Berndt, »Introduction /How to Be Complicit with Materials.« In: Petra Lange-Berndt (ed.). *Materiality. Documents of Contemporary Art*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2015, 13.

2_ The concept of the hyperobject is introduced by Rice University (UK) professor and speculative realism thinker Timothy B. Morton to describe massive objects (climate change, the Internet or the more abstract notion of racism, etc.) that seem to be challenging to grasp, although we constantly observe their manifestation. Hyperobjects, with their touch of the sublime, are spooky changers of the game/matrix in which we are immersed. See Timothy Morton. *Hyperobjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*. Minnesota: Minnesota Press, 2013.

- 3_ Karheinz Barck. "Materiality, Materialism, Performance" In Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Karl Ludwig Pfeifer (ed.). *Materialities of Communication*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- 4_ Jurij Krpan. "Paining with Sound." In: *Marko Batista: Temporary Objects and Hybrid Ambients*. Ljubljana in Slovenj Gradec: Aksioma in Koroška galerija likovnih umetnosti, 2014, 20.
- 5_ In humanities, Gilles Deleuz and Felix Guattari did pioneering work in this field with their *Mille Plateaux*.
- 6_ A 2012 UN report on human overpopulation: www.mercatornet.com/demography/view/10244#sthash.8G3Mv3ml.dpuf
- 7_ Timothy Clark. *The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London, et al.: Bloomsbury, 2015, 185.
- 8_ Timothy Clark. *The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London, et al.: Bloomsbury, 2015.
- 9_ Ibid, X
- 10_ Ibid, 160.
- 11_ In defining the colonial capitalist matrix, I refer to, summarize or copy the text I co-authored with Urban Belina for the program booklet for the performance of Jubilej (2021), as this conceptualization seems to be crucial for understanding the dominant understanding of human, nature and technology. The contribution is in Slovenian. Urban Belina and Jasmina Založnik. "Jubilej kot ceremonial sožitja dediščin sveta." In: Tery Žeželj (ed.) Glej List: *Jubilej*, Ljubljana: Gledališče Glej, 2021, 11–27.
- 12_ Walter D. Mignolo. "Interview - Walter Mignolo/Part2: Key Concepts." E-International Relations. E-IR Publications, 2017. Online. 16. 2. 2021. <<https://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/21/interview-walter-mignolopart-2-key-concepts/>>.
- 13_ Walter D. Mignolo, Katherine E. Walsh. *On Decoloniality. Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Duke University Press, 2018, 163.
- 14_ Ibid, 158–159.
- 15_ Timothy Morton. *Dark Ecology. For a Logic of Future Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.
- 16_ Bojana Kunst. *Življenje umetnosti. Prečne črte skrbi (The Life of Art: Transversal Lines of Care)*. Ljubljana: Maska, 2021.
- 17_ Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen in John R. McNeill, »The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?«, *Ambio* 38 (2007), 614–21. Quote from Timothy Clark. *The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London, et al.: Bloomsbury, 2015, 1
- 18_ Bojana Kunst. *The Life of Art: Transversal Lines of Care*, 20.
- 19_ Ibid, 22.



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