



PRESS KIT
EXHIBITION

IN THE FOLDS OF MAPS

DANS LES PLS
DES CARTES

sat 25 OCT 25 ▶ sun 11 JAN 26

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Quai Ferdinand-Favre | 44000 Nantes - France

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DANS LES PLIS DES CARTES

IN THE FOLDS OF MAPS

APY Lands • Frédérique Aït-Touati, Alexandra Arènes et Axelle Grégoire •
François Burland • Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler • Ghazel • Michael Golz •
Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien • MIT Senseable City Lab • Mathias Poisson • Jean-
François Rey • Studio Lemerrier: Joanie Lemerrier and Juliette Bibasse • Suzanne Treister •
KeckCAVES - University of California (Davis) • Liam Young

**What if maps were not
just tools for finding your
way around, but also fields
for artistic exploration,
territories in which to
dream, stories to be
written?**

A map gives shape to the vastness that surrounds us, translating space into two dimensions to enable us to understand the world and find our way around it. Conceptual constructions as much as they are utilitarian objects, maps are creations by nature: they embody selective knowledge and a particular perspective. They are partial and biased interpretations of the world which can betray underlying dominations and aspirations.

At the crossroads of reality and the imaginary, cartography combines scientific rigour with creative potential. Between art brut, contemporary art, and scientific research, this exhibition brings together a dozen projects that use cartography in both documentary and fictional ways. For the researchers and artists presented here, the map is a

medium for tracing alternative narratives about exile as well as climate and geopolitical crises. It is also a powerful vehicle for utopia, capable of modelling unprecedented scenarios to rethink future landscapes, our relationship with living beings, and the emergence of new technologies for the common good.

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In addition to the works, a hundred or so works on cartography are available for consultation.

A set of maps from the Geneva library collection is also on display, providing a historical perspective.

CURATORS

Eli Commins

Director of Le Lieu Unique,
Nantes

Eli Commins has been director of Le Lieu Unique, the Scène nationale of Nantes, since 2021. He previously worked at the Ministry of Culture, where he coordinated digital and multidisciplinary policies in the creative sector. He also participated as deputy director in the creation of La Panacée, an exhibition space dedicated to contemporary creation, now part of MO.CO. in Montpellier. Commins began his career as a writer and director, with a particular interest in hybrid forms and non-linear narratives.

Patrick Gyger

Managing Director
of Plateforme 10, Lausanne

Patrick Gyger is a historian by training. From 1999 to 2010, he directed the Maison d'Ailleurs, a museum of utopia (Switzerland), and from 2001 to 2005, he was also artistic director of Les Utopiales (Nantes). From 2011 to 2020, he was director of Le Lieu Unique, with a focus on utopia and unconventional practices. Since 2021, he has been director general of Plateforme 10, Lausanne's arts district, which includes the Musée cantonal des Beaux-Arts, the mudac (design), and Photo Elysée (photography).

Alexandra Müller

Director of the Musée Jules
Verne and the Cité des
Imaginaires project

Since September 2024, Alexandra Müller has been director of the Musée Jules Verne and the Cité des Imaginaires project. After working at the DRAC Île-de-France, the Maison de Victor Hugo (City of Paris), and the Centre Pompidou in Paris, she joined the Centre Pompidou-Metz team as an exhibition curator. She is interested in the intersections between the imaginary and speculative artistic creation. Her work explores how these alternative visions can change our view of the world, making utopia a driving force for hope and a space for dialogue between art, society, and the future.



APY LANDS, *Ngura Pulka Tjukurpa Pulka*, 2018 © Apy Art Centre Collective. Bérengère Primat Collection, courtesy of the Fondation Opale

APY LANDS (AU)

Nganampa Ngura Manta Milmilpatjara

2018
« Notre Terre est sacrée »
Acrylic on canvas

Ngura Pulka Tjukurpa Pulka

2018
« Grande Terre, Grande Loi »
Acrylic on canvas

Bérengère Primat Collection
Courtesy Fondation Opale, Lens, Suisse

The collective works of the Anangu Aboriginal artists of the APY Lands embody a living cartography, where land, memory, and spirituality are intertwined. Through traditional motifs, ancestral symbols, and a palette of natural pigments—red, yellow, white, and black ochres—they retrace the songlines: the sung routes that cross Australia and connect sacred places, stories of creation, and ancestral laws. Inspired by oral tradition and myths, these creations reveal that, beyond physical geography, the earth is a space of living memory, stories, and relationships that must be preserved.

By bearing witness to the power of a utopia based on respect for ecosystems and indigenous knowledge, these works reveal another way of thinking about cartography—no longer as a simple tool of measurement, but as a bridge between past, present, and future.



François Burland, *Géographies perdues*, 2018 © photo: Jacques Bétant /
Below: *Le voyage intranquille des trois Fatou* (détail), 2022 © photo: Jacques Bétant

FRANÇOIS BURLAND (CH)

Géographies perdues

2018
Ink drawing on industrial paper

Le voyage intranquille des trois Fatou

2022
Ink drawing on industrial paper

Courtesy of the artist

These creations are the result of an encounter between François Burland and young adults committed on the road to exile. Between the illusions fed by smugglers and the hope of a better life elsewhere, these "Cartographies of Wonder" tell stories of journeys marked by hardship and violence, but also by dreams of the past and the future. These maps thus become objects of reappropriation: they retrace personal stories, heart-wrenching decisions and forced diversions, while opening up to narratives imbued with mystery, poetry, and hope.

Under the impetus of curator Mamadou Boye Diallo, the project was then enriched with new contributions in Dakar. Alongside local residents, returning migrants and refugees from other African countries shared their experiences, giving rise to a new collection of accounts, this time gathered at the other end of the migratory journey.





FRÉDÉRIQUE AÏT-TOUATI, ALEXANDRA ARÈNES AND AXELLE GRÉGOIRE

(FR)

Lever de Terre - Souvenir d'expédition Terra Forma

Frédérique Aït-Touati, Alexandra Arènes
and Axelle Grégoire
2024
Image-making from fragments of
cartographic surveys conducted since
2019

Modèle sol

Frédérique Aït-Touati, Alexandra Arènes
and Axelle Grégoire
2019
Excerpt from Chapter 1 of *Terra Forma*,
manual of potential cartographies
(Éditions B42).

Reversal Cycle

Alexandra Arènes
and Soheil Hajmirbaba
2020
Animation, b/w, silent, 02 :15 min.
Produced as part of *Critical Zone virtual
exhibition*, ZKM, Center for Art and Media,
Karlsruhe, Germany.

Carottage de la zone critique

Alexandra Arènes, Axelle Grégoire
2025

Carte de l'observatoire de la zone critique du Strengbach, Vosges, France

Alexandra Arènes
2022
Project supported by ZKM, Karlsruhe
Art and Media Center (Germany),
OZCAR and OHGE (Hydrogeochemical
Environmental Observatory - Strasbourg).

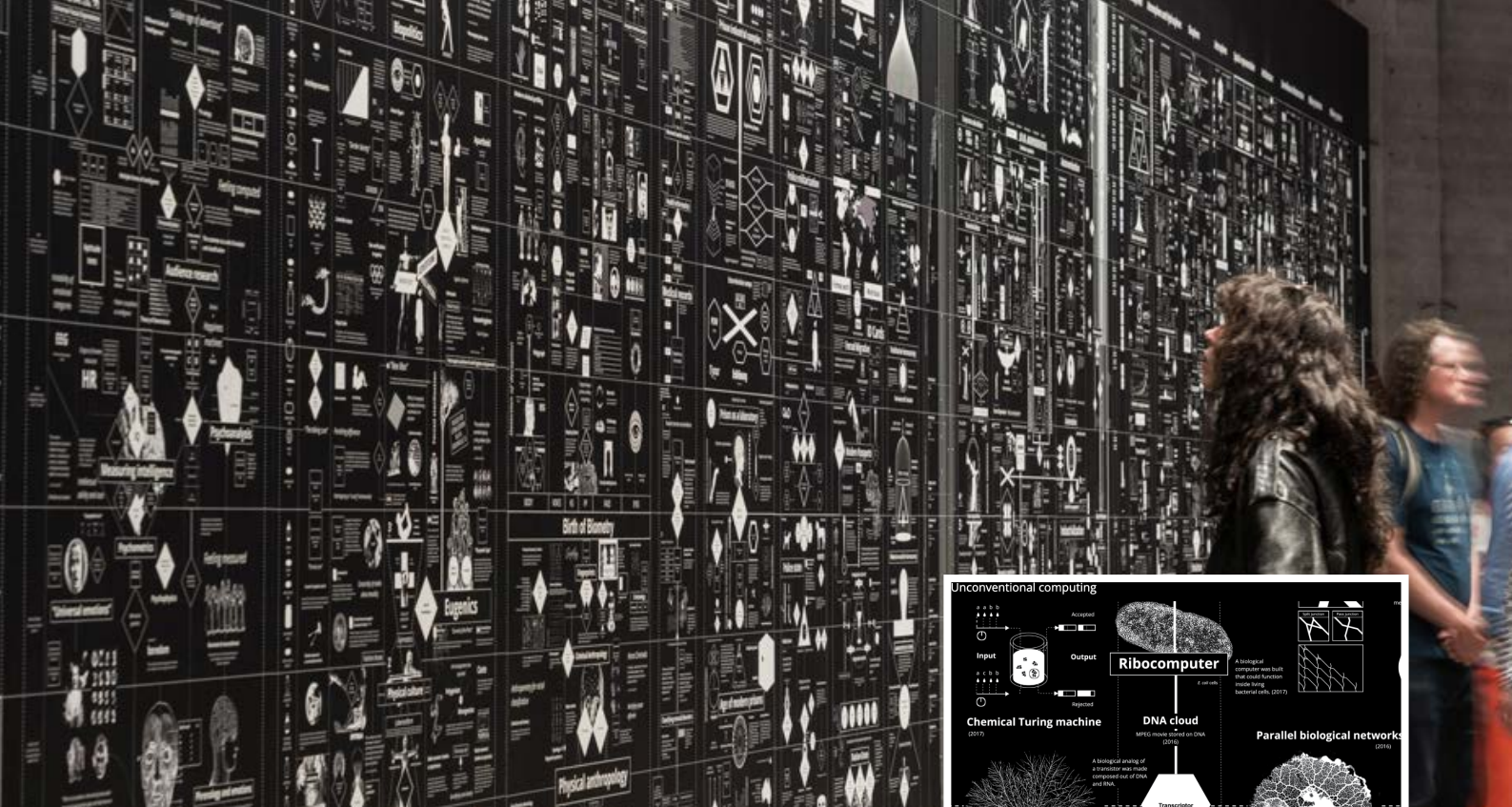
Carte-enquête sur les sols des Monts du Forez

Axelle Grégoire
2025
Survey of farmers in the Monts du Forez
region.
Project supported since 2023 by the
Château de Goutelas cultural center.

Revisiting the famous Earthrise of 1968, this terrestrial apparition invites us to a different kind of exploration. Here, the spatial ascent becomes a dive into the depths thanks to a new cartographic tool for exploring, investigating, imagining, and ultimately living as earthlings in a world from which there is no escape. The tool and its manual, the drawn core samples, the models, and the

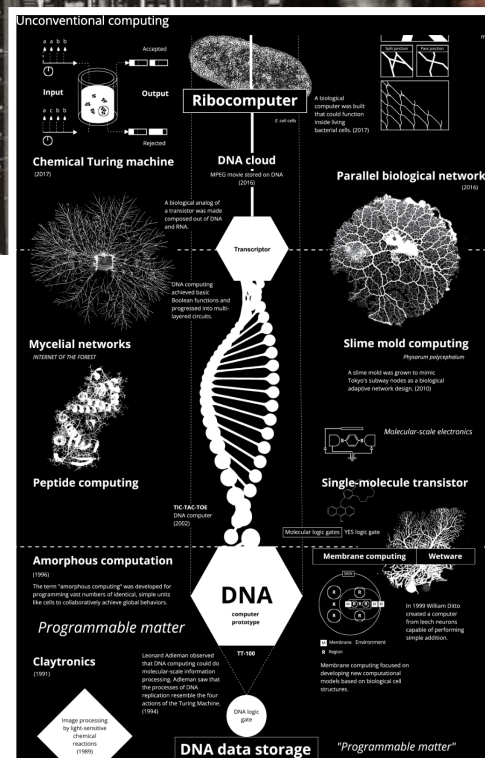
maps of the exploration reveal the cross-sectional method used by the Terra Forma team to travel from the atmosphere (at the centre of the map) to the deep rocks (at its periphery) and collect heterogeneous data, multiple voices, contradictory imaginaries and open-ended questions. Sulphur, beech trees, sediment, gravimeters, pumps, biodynamic preparations, roots, basalt,

and groundwater are just some of the examples of organisms and objects found on the terrestrial site that is revealed in this cartographic work.



Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler, *Calculating Empires* (detail), 2023 © photo: Marco Cappelletti

KATE CRAWFORD (AU) & VLADAN JOLER (SRB)



Calculating Empires: A Genealogy of Power and Technology, since 1500

2023
wallpaper

Courtesy of the artist

Calculating Empires is a visual work by Kate Crawford and Vladan Joler that examines five centuries of interactions between technology and power. Combining art, science, and research, it traces the evolution of imperial systems – from colonialism to automation – in order to reveal how these structures still shape our world. The project begins in 1500, at the dawn of European empires, with the rise of trade routes, navigational instruments, and the printing press, which redefined power and knowledge. It highlights how colonisation, the classification of living organisms, and the privatisation of resources laid the

foundations for today's technological and military industries.

Rejecting a linear narrative, *Calculating Empires* presents a visual mapping of the technological present through the prism of the past, providing a critical alternative to contemporary discourses that often focus on recent innovations.



GHAZEL (IRN)

Dyslexia

2015 – 2017

Installation comprising
four framed painted maps
Acrylic and ballpoint pen
on glossy printed world map

Courtesy
CNAP (France)
National Centre for the Plastic Arts

With *Dyslexia*, Ghazel erases the world as we know it. On real geographical maps covered with black ink and scribbled signs, she erases borders, countries, and flags, abolishing familiar landmarks to leave only an indistinct mass. Born in Tehran and living in France since 1986, the artist uses these maps to reflect her own state of exile—a geographical and mental limbo. This radical gesture reveals the invisible scars of conflicts, pollution, and disasters caused by humans, while denouncing the illusion of a divided and controllable world.

Deprived of its boundaries and apparent order, the map becomes an uncertain, unsettling territory, where erasure speaks as much of loss as of the violence of imposed borders. A fragile space, suspended between disappearance and persistence



Michael Golz, *Athosland* (detail), 2018 © Euward

MICHAEL GOLZ (CH)

Athosland (extrait)

1960-2025
Installation, mixed media on paper

Courtesy of the artist

Athosland is an imaginary universe that Michael Golz has been developing since childhood. Born in the 1960s, this fantastical world has been enriched over the decades with maps, drawings, glossaries, and detailed guides describing the customs and creatures that inhabit it. Golz, who trained as a gardener and lives in shared housing, has devoted his life to this monumental work. Comprising hundreds of A4 maps assembled into a gigantic fresco, *Athosland* is accompanied by thousands of pages of drawings. The artist blends semi-industrial German landscapes, rural utopia, and fantasy. There are entire cities

with infrastructure, absurd traditions (payment made with buttons, swimming pools in train stations, sausages that taste like excrement), and giant creatures. Golz regularly updates his maps, bringing about a coherent and teeming inner world. Every detail, from transport networks to the habits of the inhabitants, reflects his memories, relationships, and dreams. *Athosland* is both a fictional world and an autobiographical drawing, a work of art brut that explores the boundaries between imagination and memory.



Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien, *Temple of Care*, 2024 © Marie-Claire Messouma Manlanbien, ADAGP, Paris.
Photo © Manifesta 15 Barcelona Metropolitana / Cecilia Coca

MARIE-CLAIRE MESSOUMA MANLANBIEN (FR)

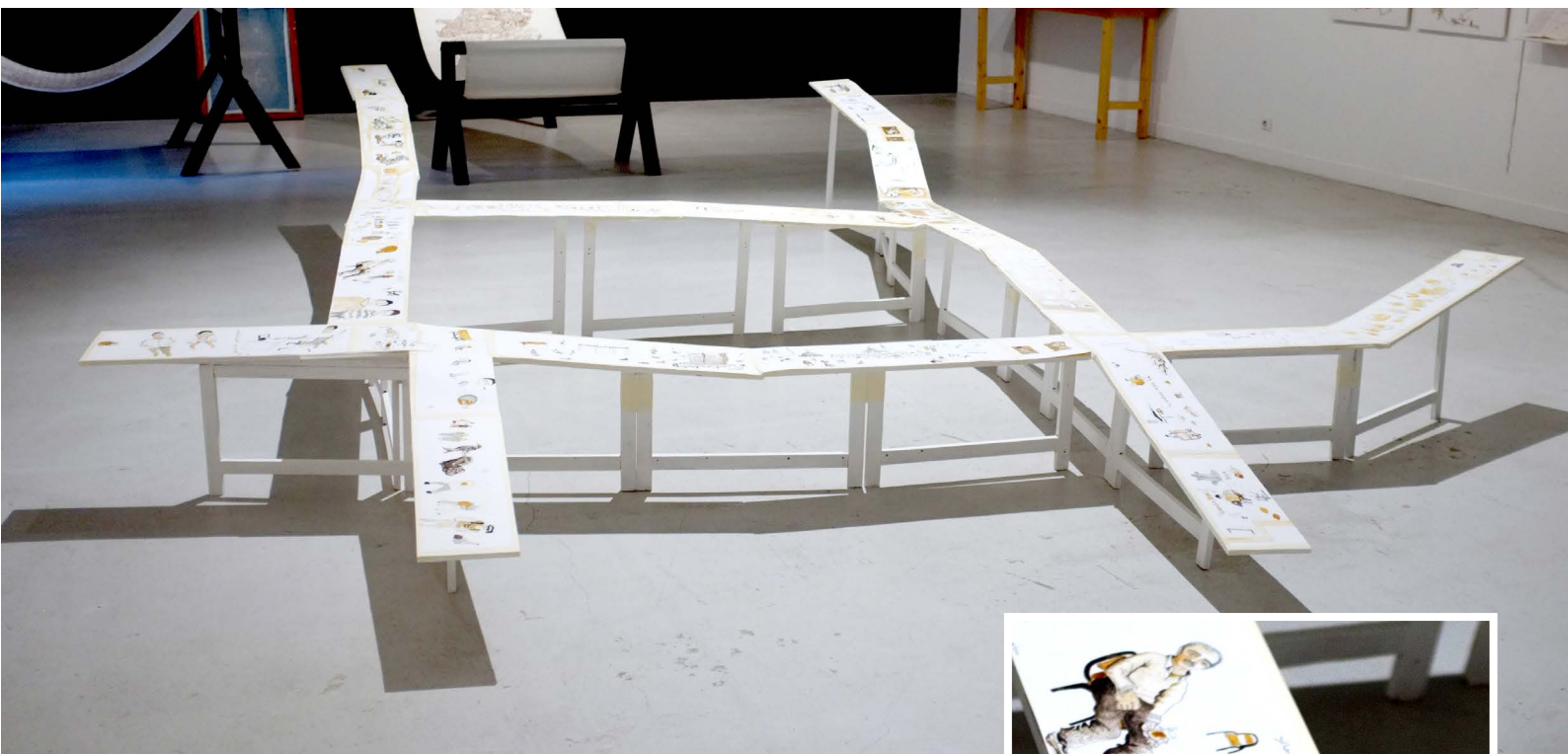
Temple of Care

2024
Installation, stones, various rows, raffia,
ceramics, leather

Courtesy of the artist

Through her maps, Marie Claire Messouma Manlanbien draws an intimate cartography of her Afro-Caribbean heritage. Of Guadeloupean and Ivorian origin, she has drawn on the craftsmanship—particularly weaving and embroidery—passed down by her mother and grandmother since childhood, working with raffia, leather, clay, shells, and stone. Through juxtaposed lines and textures, these materials trace inner paths that connect Akan matriarchal cosmologies and Creole imaginaries to our present.

The installation becomes a ritual atlas: tracing and designating both personal history alongside collective narratives gives form to places of the mind and opens doors between the past and the present. By combining traditional savoir-faire and industrial traces, she questions our relationship with the living and celebrates the polyphonic unity of her heritage.



Mathias Poisson, *Quartier des boulets, Istanbul*, view of the exhibition at AOB, Théâtre de Bar-le-Duc, 2022
© Philippe Conti



MATHIAS POISSON

(FR)

Quartier des boulets, Istanbul

2012
Installation, wood, drawings

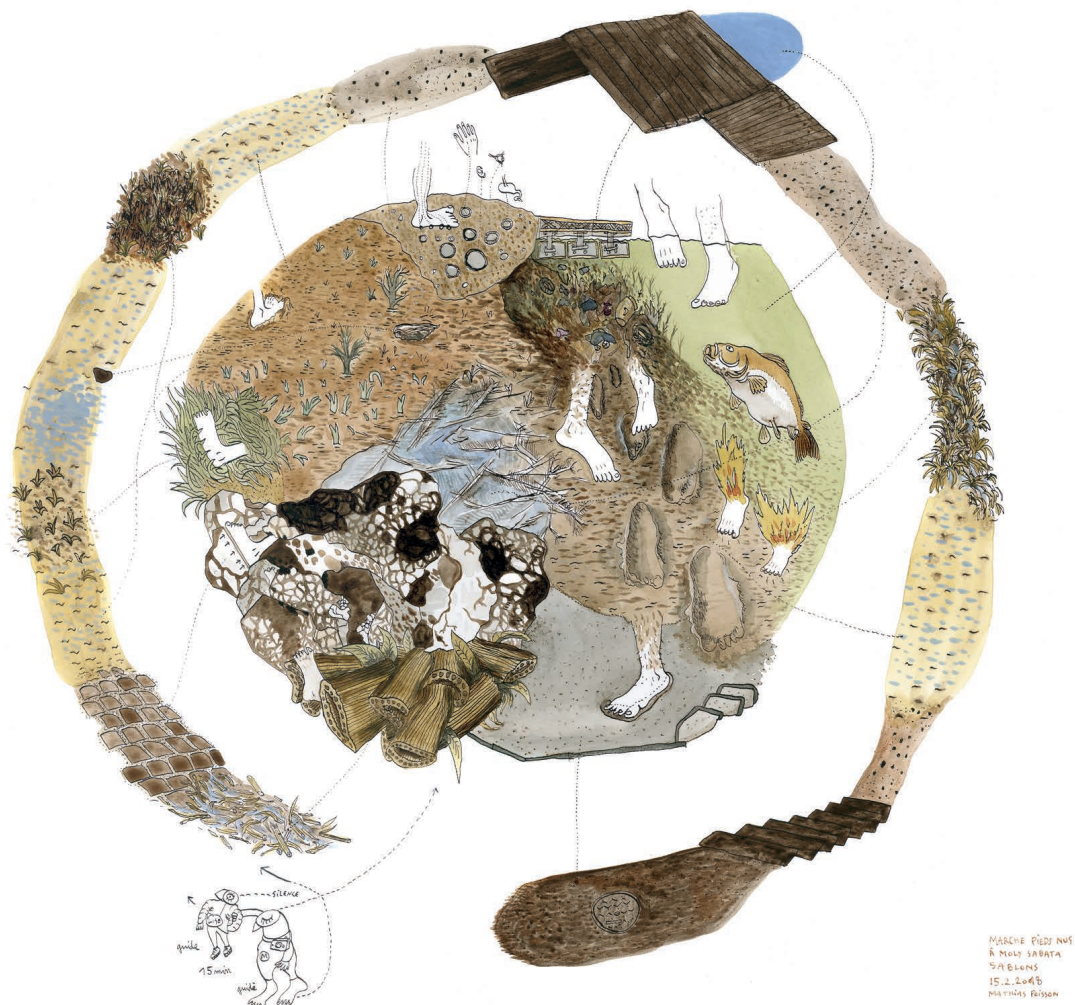
Courtesy of the artist

Mathias Poisson maps out lived, sensory territories, far from the objective nature of geographical surveys. In Istanbul's Tophane district, he walks the streets, listens to stories, and captures the tensions of a space fighting for survival. Gentrification, speculation, threats minority groups: his drawings bear the memory of these daily acts of resistance. Made with vegetable ink produced on site – tea, pomegranate peel, carpenter's sawdust – his maps are an integral part of the neighbourhood.

Displayed on wooden trays at eye level, they trace a fragile, inhabited landscape where ancient struggles and contemporary hopes intersect. An invitation to look at the city differently, in all its human and political depth.

Quartier des boulets, Istanbul (details)
© Mathias Poisson





MATHIAS POISSON (FR)

Graphies du déplacement

2001 - 2020

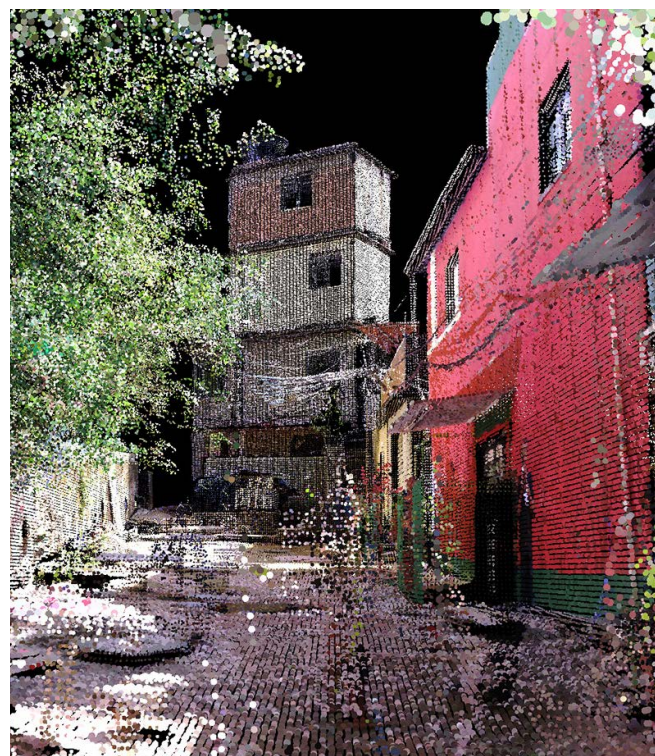
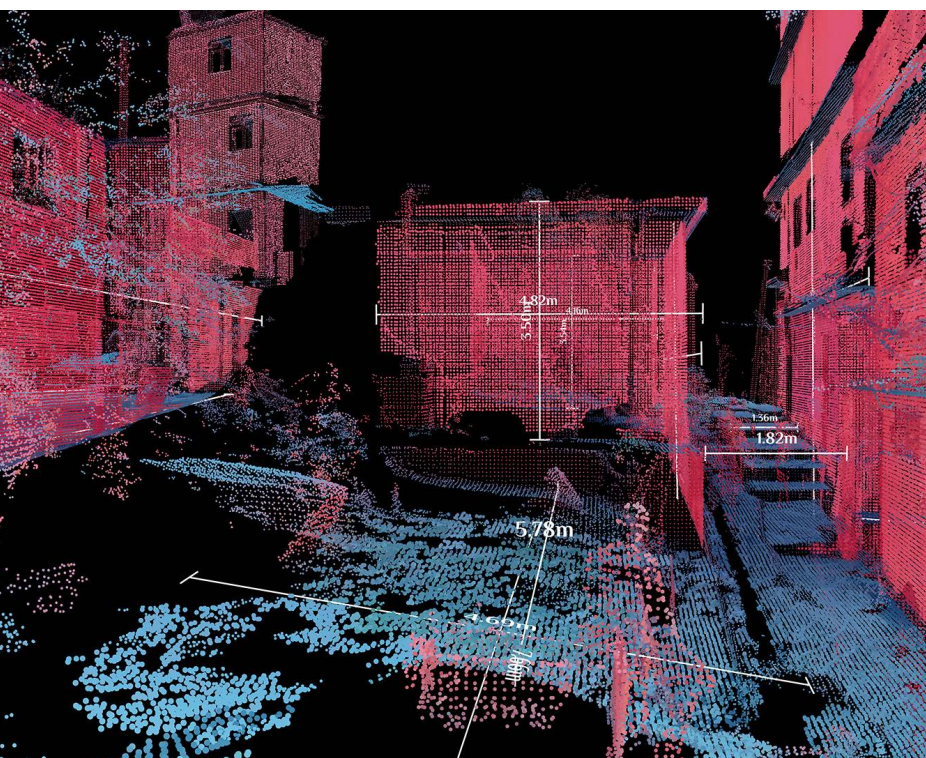
Paper, inks, pencil, watercolor markers,
photographs

Courtesy of the artist

Mathias Poisson's *Graphies du déplacement* invite us to immerse ourselves in the art of walking as an artistic practice. The artist explores how the body in motion weaves invisible narratives as it moves through a space. Through his "sensory maps", drawings, choreographic scores, and photographs, he transforms sensations, rhythms, and memories into a deeply personal cartography.

Far from traditional points of reference and objective measurements, his works trace fragments of territory perceived through experience, memory, and

the senses. Through a meticulous exploration of every detail, they invite us to lose ourselves so as to better inhabit the moment. This approach, both poetic and attentive, celebrates our sensory relationship with the world and questions the way we inhabit space, revealing that every walk also involves a reading of our inner landscapes.



Favelas 4D. View of Rocinha, a favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil © MIT Senseable City Lab

MIT SENSEABLE CITY LAB (USA)

Favelas 4D

2021
Interactive website

Favelas 4D is a project of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Senseable City Lab, in collaboration with Washington Fajardo and the municipality of Rio de Janeiro.

Around the world, nearly one billion people live in informal settlements or “slums” known as favelas in Brazil. These precarious structures, which have no master plan and do not comply with urban planning and architectural regulations, form a dense, constantly evolving environment.

Due to their complexity, favelas are impossible to map using traditional methods. To address this challenge, the MIT Senseable City Lab in Boston has developed a new method for spatial analysis of Rocinha, the largest favela in Rio de Janeiro which is home to around 100,000 people.

Using 3D scans carried out with LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging)

technology, the *Favelas 4D* project is able to represent Rocinha’s narrow streets and multi-layered buildings with an unprecedented degree of accuracy.

Led by architect and engineer Carlo Ratti, the MIT Senseable City Lab explores the interface between digital technologies, inhabitants, and urban environments, with the aim of anticipating urban transformations and proposing innovative solutions to improve quality of life.



Jean-François Rey, *Nouveaux Voyages extraordinaires, une cartographie du roman*

NOUVEAUX VOYAGES EXTRAORDINAIRES, UNE CARTOGRAPHIE DU ROMAN

**Jean-François Rey
& Jean Demerliac** (FR)

2008
Interactive application
with touch screen

Production: Patrick Gyger
(Maison d'Ailleurs, CH)

Courtesy Maison d'Ailleurs

This is an invitation to an interactive journey into the *Terra incognita* of adventure novels. On a map, visitors can follow the terrestrial and celestial wanderings of the heroes from over 150 novels by Jules Verne. Through the journeys of heroes such as Crusoe, Gulliver, Klim, Munchausen, Frankenstein, Pym, Ishmael, Quatermain, Dracula, Challenger, Kim, Lavarède, and Tarzan, the audience is immersed in an extraordinary epic adventure to the outer reaches of the solar system.

Albums composed of texts and images complement the cartographic animations and provide keys to understanding this still uncharted world.



Studio Lemer cier, Joannie Lemer cier & Juliette Bibasse, *Transgressions marines*, 2025 © Studio Lemer cier



STUDIO LEMERCIER (FR)

JOANNIE LEMERCIER & JULIETTE BIBASSE

Transgressions marines

2025
Installation
Drawing machine, paper,
pens and computer

Courtesy of the artist
With the support of Nantes Métropole

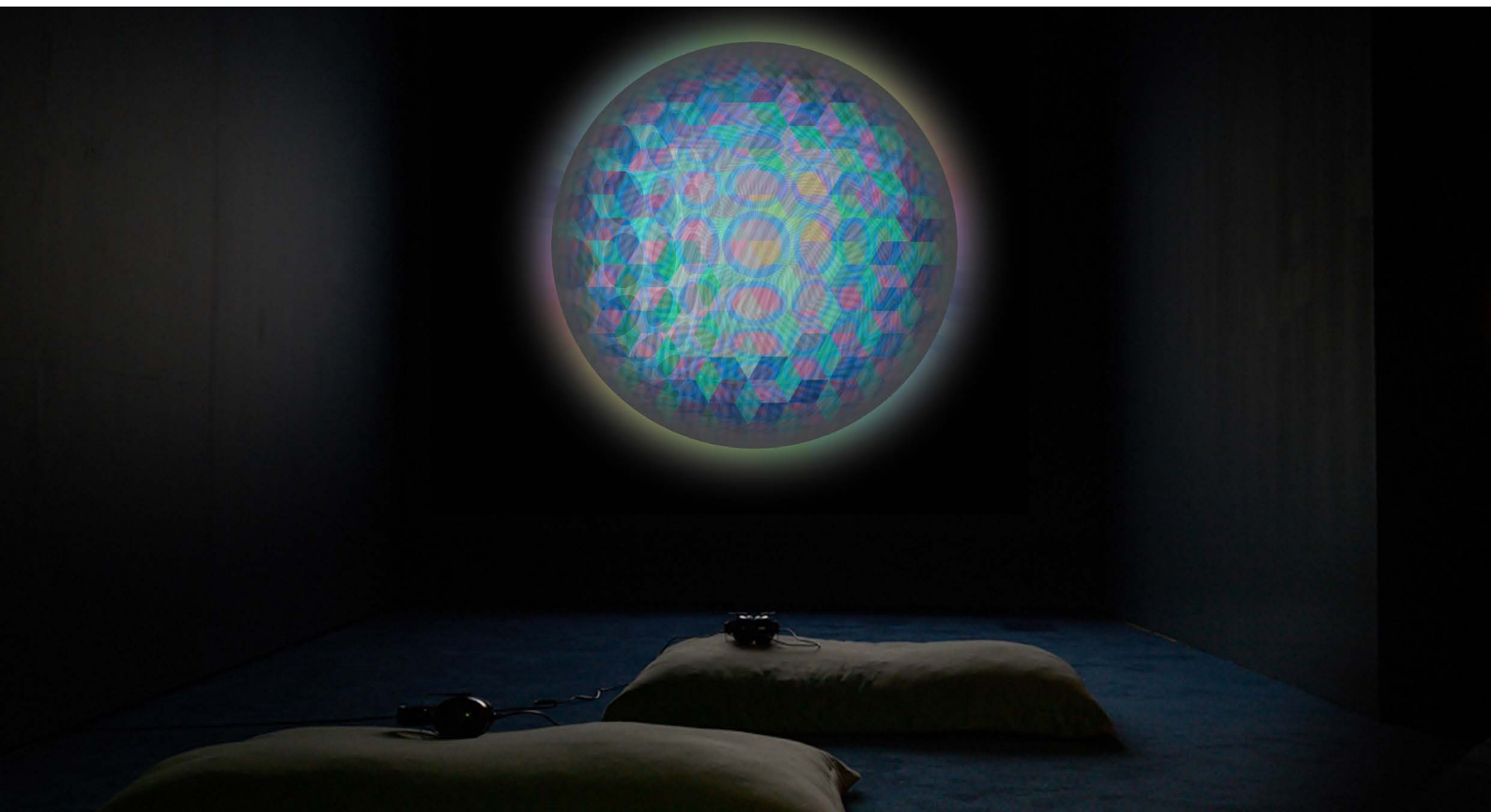
Joannie Lemer cier has been using plotters, or drawing machines, for many years. The machine acts as an extension of the artist's arm, drawing tirelessly with great precision. Here, the drawing machine is used to create a daily drawing, allowing the public to witness the process.

These *Transgressions marines*, created specifically for this exhibition, are an extension of initial experiments around rising sea levels, conducted in 2020.

A marine transgression refers to "the permanent invasion of coastal areas by the sea, due to the subsidence of land or a general rise in sea level". Marine transgressions, as studied in geology and palaeogeography, take us back to ancient times in the Earth's history.

By focusing on details, the artist creates a dialogue between a possible future for iconic cities and the Atlantic coast. He highlights the similar consequences of climate change on several scales. These diptychs show what remains visible of the territory – above the water – and the submerged areas. Using a complex code developed for this project, the artist adjusts the quantity of CO2 emitted (in gigatonnes) and their direct impact on sea levels (in centimetres). The whole series therefore unfolds at different mathematically plausible moments in time.

This new series is part of a vast body of drawings executed by plotters: *Paysages Possibles*.



Suzanne Treister, *THUTOAH* (*The Holographic Universe Theory of Art History*)
FACT, Liverpool, Royaume-Uni 2018. Courtesy of the artist, Annelly Juda Fine Art, London and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York. © photo: Suzanne Treister

SUZANNE TREISTER (UK)

The Holographic Universe Theory Of Art History (THUTOAH)

2018
Video installation (16:54 min)
and drawings

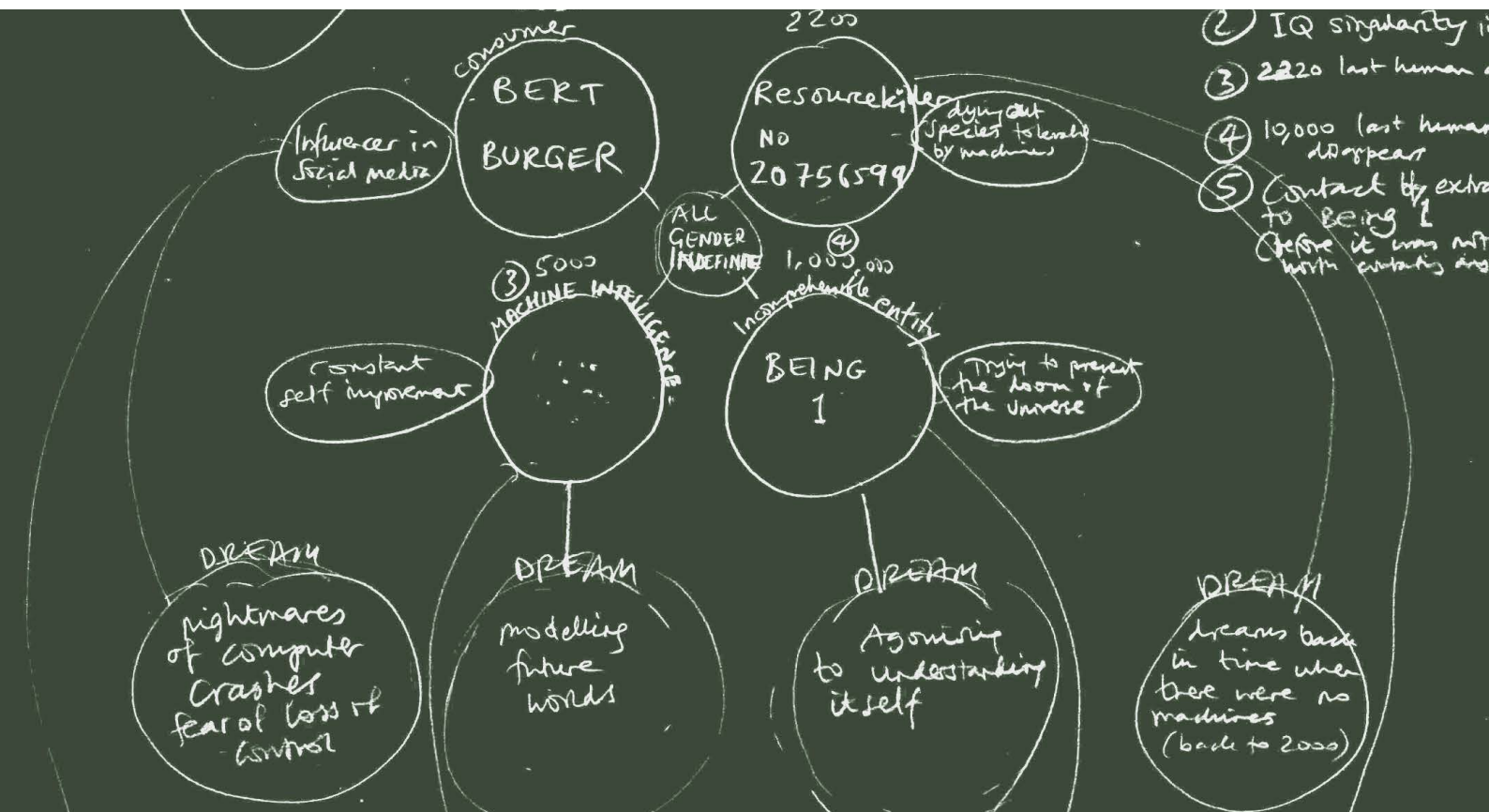
Courtesy of the artist

THUTOAH explores the idea that our universe could be perceived as a complex hologram. Based on the holographic principle, this approach imagines that, far beyond the traditional contexts of art history, artists may have unconsciously attempted to represent this holographic nature of reality.

The project revolves around the continuous projection of more than 25,000 images from art history—from cave art to contemporary expressions, including art brut and psychedelic art—at a rate of 25 images per second. This visual flow symbolically evokes the functioning of the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research). It is accompanied by a soundtrack combining interviews and watercolours by CERN scientists,

which visually and poetically translate the holographic principle.

In this way, *THUTOAH* puts forward the idea that an intuitive perception of this holographic reality has survived through the ages, beyond the spiritual or mystical representations that have already been identified. It offers a new interpretation of art as a quasi-cartographic attempt, whether conscious or not, to capture the universe's fundamental structure.



Suzanne Treister, *Scientific Dreaming*, 2022. Courtesy of the artist, Annely Juda Fine Art, London and P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York. © photo: Suzanne Treister

SUZANNE TREISTER (UK)

Scientific Dreaming

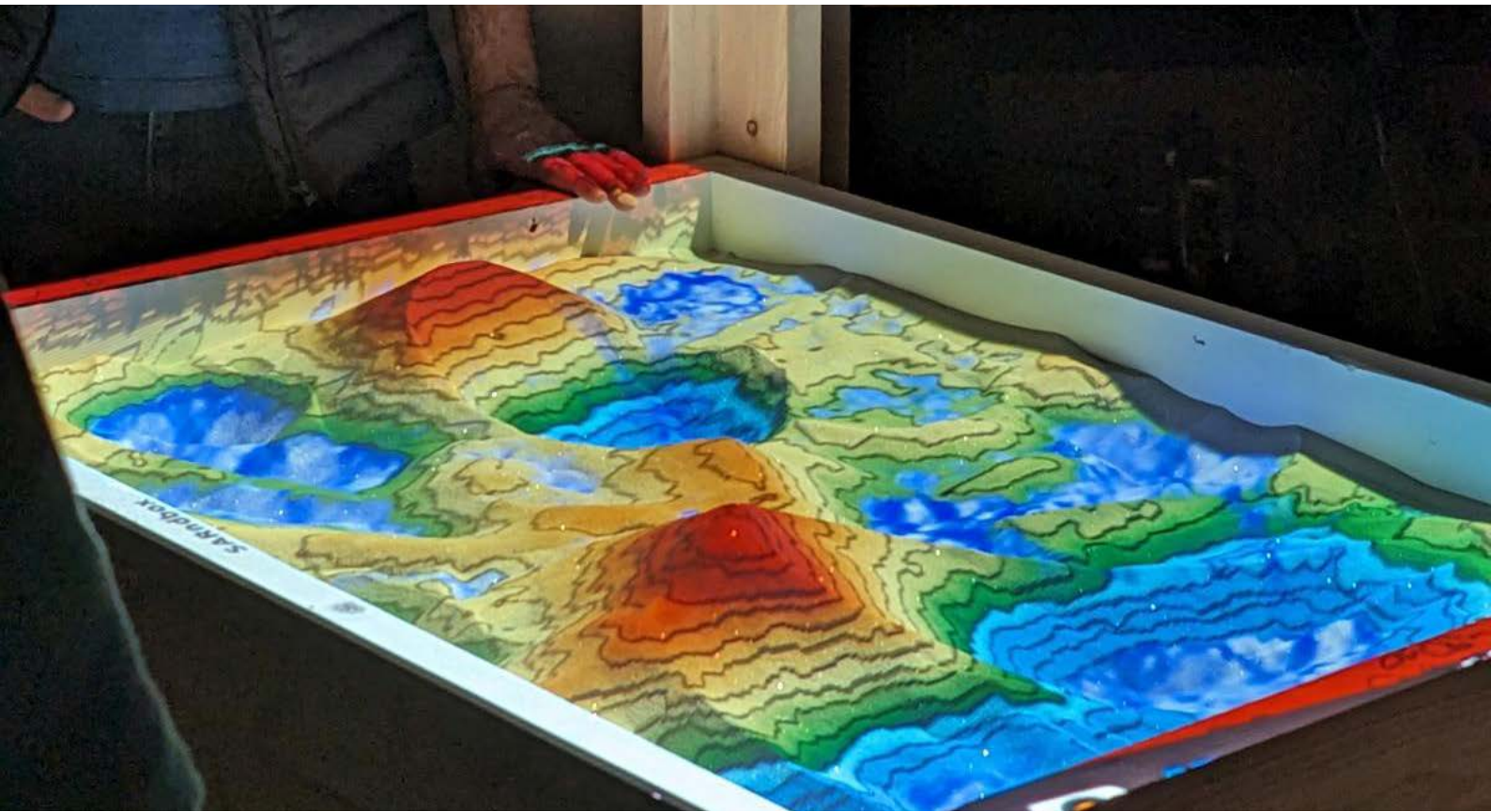
2022

Courtesy of the artist

Scientific Dreaming is a project that aims to stimulate and expand the unconscious imagination of scientists by inviting them to map positive futures based on hypothetical scientific advances and their possible repercussions, both for our world and dimensions beyond it.

The project also highlights the potential risks associated with these technological advances. The first part of *Scientific Dreaming* consists of 14 stories developed during science fiction writing workshops with scientists from CERN in Geneva during the summer of 2022. The second part offers a series of diagrams inspired by specific elements from these stories, thus expanding the reflection on scientific visions of the future.

This project was carried out during a residency at La Becque, Switzerland, with the support of Arts at CERN and under the direction of Monica Bello.



Augmented Reality Sandbox © DR

KeckCAVES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNY (DAVIS)

(USA)

Augmented Reality Sandbox

2016

Production: W.M. Keck Center for Active Visualization in the Earth Sciences, University of California, Davis

Augmented Reality Sandbox is an interactive tool that allows users to understand and communicate certain principles of cartography, geology, and the natural phenomena that give rise to landscape formation. The version presented here was created based on an open-source project by geologist Peter Gold of the University of California, Davis.

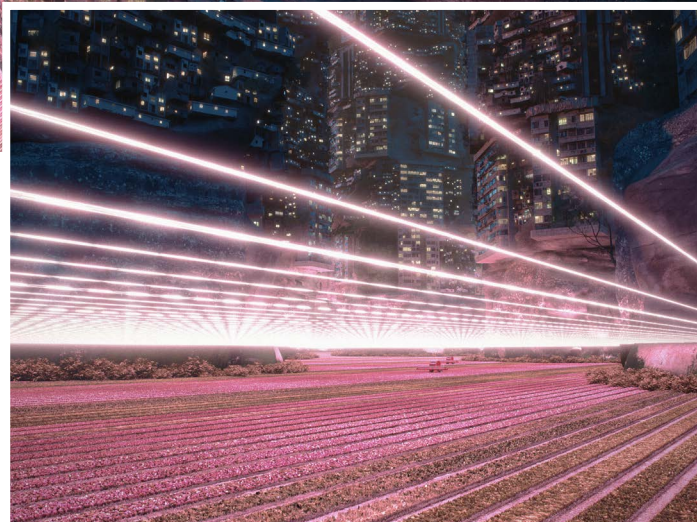
The Sandbox is based on a computer model that captures in real time the changes in relief of a surface and calculates three-dimensional cartographic data. A virtual topography is projected onto the sandbox, indicating variations in elevation and simulating the hydrological effects generated by changes in the surface.

The trajectory of the water is calculated based on equations developed by mathematician Adhémar Barré de Saint-Venant, which are used to model fluid flow in shallow environments.



Liam Young, *Planet City* (stills from the film) © Liam Young

LIAM YOUNG (AU)



Planet City, a city for 10 billion inhabitants

2021
Video, 16 min

Courtesy of the artist

Planet City explores a scenario of extreme densification of the Earth's population, in which 10 billion people would gather in a single city, having given up on populating the rest of the planet. To design this giant metropolis, which is described in a film and a book, Liam Young drew on a group of researchers and contacts in different parts of the world to produce what he calls "critical architecture", which questions the environmental and climatic situation we find ourselves in today.

Planet City approaches climate change not as the result of a technical and industrial history, but as an ideological and cultural phenomenon, following a long period of colonisation and extractivism of the Earth's surface.

DANS LES PLIS DES CARTES

sat 25 OCT 25 ▶ sun 11 JAN 26

**from October 25, 2025
to January 11, 2026**

from Tuesday to Saturday:
2.00 pm > 7.00 pm,
Sunday: 3.00 pm > 7.00 pm
Closed on Monday.

opening

Friday October 24 at 6:30 pm

press visit

Friday October 24 at 2:00 pm
—

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Press kit

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Sur tes lèvres, 2024 © Fanny Trichet

LE LIEU UNIQUE

a national center for contemporary arts in Nantes

Housed in the former LU biscuit factory since the 1st January 2000, 'Le Lieu Unique' is a friendly, cultural melting pot, ripe for artistic exploration. All year long, the Lieu Unique offers up an international programme that brings performing arts, music, and contemporary art to the public, while also hosting a variety of different festivals. On the weekend, the bar also becomes a venue for DJs and concerts.

Every year, Le Lieu Unique offers:

- over **a hundred theatre and dance performances, as well as concerts**
- over **200 days of exhibitions and residences for visual artists,**

It's about 150 000 spectators for the artistic activities

lelieuunique.com



Le Lieu Unique © Martin Argyroglo