

Planetary Consciousness. Ecosystems of Care

November 4th – December 2nd 2025

Venue:

School of Digital Arts (SODA), Manchester Metropolitan University

Artists:

Ernest Borowski, Hubert Czerepok, Rafał Dominik, Eternal Engine, Justyna Górowska, INEXSISTENS, Andrei Isakov, Piotr Kopik, Agnieszka Polska, PXKRW, Szymon Rogiński, Sebulac, Anastasiia Vorobiova, Dominika Wolska

Curator Team:

Eliza Urwanowicz-Rojecka & Jakub Wróblewski

Collaboration:

Toby Heys & Adam Cooke, School of Digital Arts (SODA), Manchester Metropolitan University
Agnieszka Rudzińska, Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Visual ID:

Renata Motyka

Planetary Consciousness. Ecosystems of Care is another project designed to promote Polish and Ukrainian contemporary digital art, co-delivered by the Arsenal Gallery in Białystok and the 3D and Virtual Occurrences II Studio, Faculty of Media Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

The project has been inspired by the *planetary consciousness* category, in reference to a theory by sociologist and globalisation theorist Roland Robertson, author of the *global consciousness* notion (Robertson 1992, 2014). Thus termed by Robertson, the shift towards the world-universe relationship already assumed that the global perspective would transcend into the planetary. This angle is described in greater detail by philosopher of technology Yuk Hui:

„(...) think planetarily doesn't necessarily mean proclaiming or defining the sovereignty of outer space, or delving into terraforming and geoengineering, even though such topics might be anticipated in a book dedicated to planetary thinking. To think planetarily, first of all, means thinking beyond the configuration of modern nation-states, which have not been able to move away from vicious economic and military competition; second, it means formulating a language of coexistence that will allow diverse people and species to live on the same planet; and third, it means developing a new framework that will enable us to go beyond the question of territory, respond to the current ecological crisis, and reverse the accelerated entropic process of the Anthropocene.” (Hui, 2025)

That said, our understanding of the phrase *planetary consciousness* concerns the Earth as a whole: exploited, misused, neglected, gradually brought to the brink of annihilation – and yet approached with ever-greater subjectivity, empathy and concern. Interconnections between contemporary ecological and technological transformations seem to be of key significance to all these categories.

Thus – as Yuk Hui has suggested – it is, perhaps, worth our while to explore the present of technological diversity, or *technodiversity*: a variety of ways of understanding and constructing technology (Hui, 2019, 2025). The philosopher believes that from the planetary perspective, the new approach to technology ought to be accompanied by diversity of thought (noodiversity) and biodiversity. We intend to recognise both by exploring the structure of the contemporary technosphere, and its connections to the field of art. Consciously employing new rendering techniques, all presented works embrace the planetary perspective, opting for the caring for the planet category as their point of departure. Authors hail from regions temporarily referred to as Eastern Europe or Central and Eastern Europe. The cultural context of all artworks resonates with ways of using new imaging techniques, the aesthetic, and individual narrative facets. What vision of worlds, both real and imagined, are they creating?

Through their tender, voyeuristic and poetic gestures, artists are alluding to varied relation types on the micro and macro scale, designing new formats of communication between the technosphere, individuals, human communities and non-human beings. Their suggestion is one of carefree play on the wreckage of a dying planet, in a new and phantom fin de siècle version. They are shifting issues of accountability and agency into virtual space where all values mix. Through a unique auteur aesthetic, they are offering innovative approaches to the essence of being.

The array of tools employed in the creation of works on display is extensive, artists having used novel digital imaging methods: 3D space, animations created directly in graphic engines, gesture and facial expression capturing, reactive spatial sound, simulations and Artificial Intelligence algorithms. VR goggles help build fuller narratives and achieve the immersion effect. This is how multifaceted, generative and open simulations of reality have been generated – or worlds ready to take in an infinite user population.

Frequently arising from the choice of tools and methods of developing narratives, the aesthetic of works is diverse. Contemporary artistic quests reflect the desires, aspirations and anxieties we all share, the inhabitants of a dying planet moving through a cold and soulless universe at the speed of nine hundred thousand kilometres per hour. Do we really want to believe in accelerationist ideas elevating resource depletion-based growth beyond the interests of the planet, not to mention our own? Can the holographic universe concept – pursuant to which the three-dimensional reality we are experiencing could be a piece of information recorded on two-dimensional surface – affect our judgements and decisions? The only species capable of large-scale biosphere manipulation, are we comfortable with the awareness that we have brought Earth to the brink of the sixth extinction – five to five hundred thousand species disappearing each year, never to return? Perhaps only speculative, potential versions of reality, developed by dreamers of agency, visual rebels and travellers of virtual galaxies, can help us comprehend our intricate and tangled existence, pointing our gaze into the depths of individual microcosms – and at the planet as a living organism we are all part of.

Bibliography:

Yuk Hui, *Recursivity and Contingency*, Rowman & Littlefield International: 2019

Yuk Hui, 'An Introduction to Machine and Sovereignty: For a Planetary Thinking', e-flux Journal, Issue #153, April 2025, online: <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/153/662133/an-introduction-to-machine-and-sovereignty-for-a-planetary-thinking> (accessed 20 October 2025)

Roland Robertson (ed.), *European Globalization in Global Context*, Palgrave Macmillan: 2014

Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Sage: 1992

Organisers:

Modal Gallery, SODA Manchester (School of Digital Arts, Manchester Metropolitan University)

Adam Mickiewicz Institute

Arsenal Gallery in Białystok

Partner:

3D and Virtual Occurrences II Studio, Faculty of Media Art at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw

The event is part of the UK/Poland Season 2025 organized by the British Council, the Adam Mickiewicz Institute and the Institute of Polish Culture in London, funded by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Poland