

Imagined Space

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Course: BA Design Crafts

Word Count: 1333

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God/Nature: Exploring the Human Condition

This show is a multi-sensory space in which audience members become part of the exhibit. Weaving together surrealism, abstract-expressionism, sound art, figurative sculpture and digital art forms, the audience is swept from the banality of daily life onto a transcendental journey. In a time where humanity is facing the greatest crises of meaning, a time where we are facing our own extinction due to human-driven climate change, I intend to unravel the unconscious mind of the audience through art and get the audience to ponder the human condition through the use of interactive exercises, moving walkways and illusion.

Traditional art galleries can feel quite alienating,” says London-based curator and writer Fatos Ustek (2018) “They all have a code of conduct and an immediate authoritarian manifestation through the architectural styles or the configuration of the space.” What is important to me in this exhibit is the interactive and experiential nature of it. I want the audience to become part of the art. This is why my curation takes inspiration from an artist collective called TeamLab (2024) that consists of digital artists, programmers, engineers, CG animators, mathematicians, and architects. By creating interactive installations, they explore the relationship between humans and nature, and the convergence of art, technology, and creativity. TeamLab's artworks often incorporate digital technology such as projection mapping, sensors, and computer programming to create immersive and interactive experiences. Their installations frequently invite viewers to actively participate and engage with the artwork, blurring the boundaries between the virtual and physical worlds (Stokes-Rees, 2019).

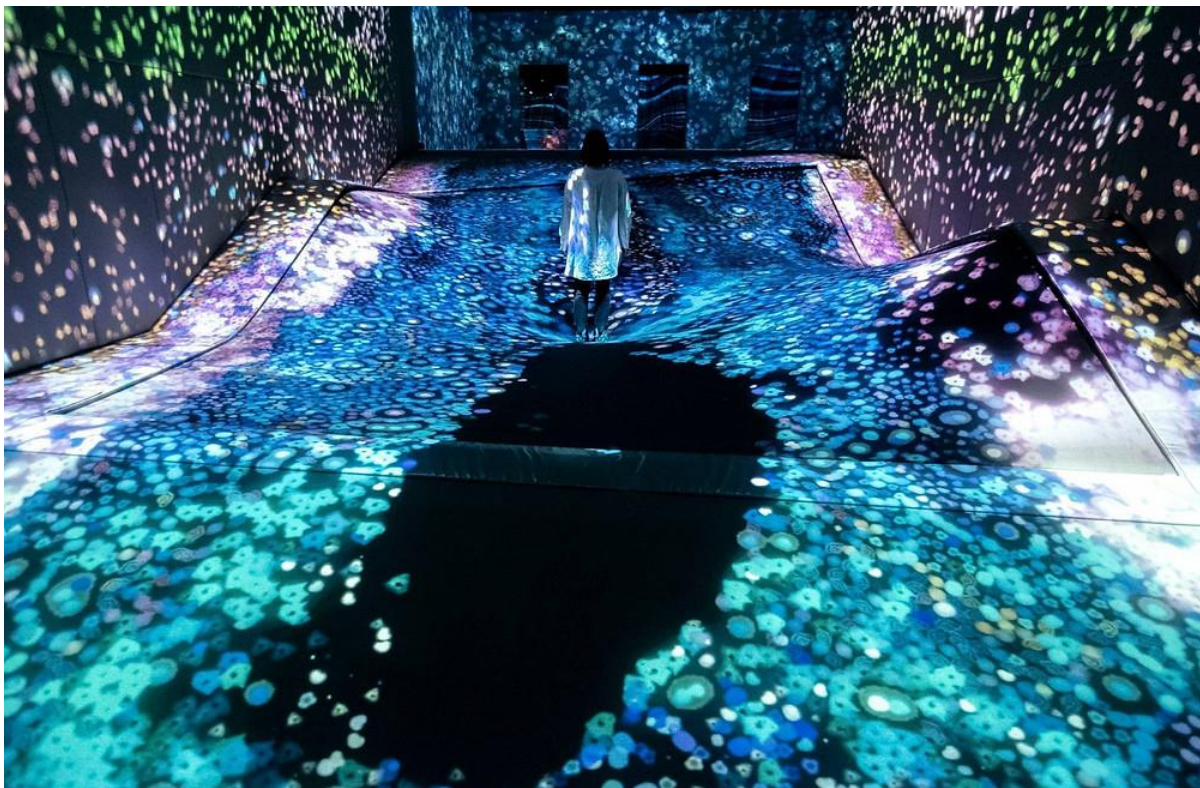


Fig 1: TeamLab Forest Fukuoka Exhibit

<https://www.uniteddirection.com/post/teamlab-forest-fukuoka>

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/Qj5z2BpMt58?si=hCv6vWaoEPMc46E3>

The exhibition will be set on a series of moving walkways that lead the audience between different rooms in which each of the artworks will be exhibited.

Walkway One: Unravelling the Unconscious

The audience enters a tunnel, stepping onto a moving walkway. The walls are made of curved touchscreens, with the tops of the tunnels low enough to be accessible for people to reach with arms outstretched. People are invited to touch the walls as they are pulled through the tunnel, allowing their bodies to trace marks without any conscious thought, allowing their grip on the rational to loosen and the depths of the unconscious to rise to the surface. Andre Breton defined Surrealism as "Psychic automatism in its pure state" and this exercise sets the stage for the rest of the exhibit. (Breton, 1924)

Room One: From Where We Came

Neolithic Japanese Pottery - Dogu Figures



Fig 2: Dogu Figures (Kobayashi et al, 2003)

A set of 5 Jomon period dogu figures are mounted onto black boxes and illuminated from below with green lights. A placard explaining the historical context of these artifacts is illuminated by white light in an otherwise dark room. The Jomon period in Japan, which lasted from around 14,000 BCE to 300 BCE, is known for its distinctive pottery and clay figurines known as "dogu." (Kobayashi et al, 2003). These figurines are characterized by their abstract, otherworldly appearance, with large, goggle-like eyes and exaggerated features. This is why I have chosen to illuminate them with green light- to emphasize an alien appearance. These hunter-gatherer people who lived so long ago might as well have been aliens to us- their lifestyles and world view miles apart from that of average modern humans. And yet despite being shrouded in mystery, this is where we came from. While the exact purpose of the dogu figures is unknown, they are believed to have had shamanistic or spiritual significance, serving as intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds (Kobayashi et al, 2003). When we encounter very old artifacts, we are reminded of the impermanence of human life and the enduring nature of human creativity.

Walkway Two: We Were Here



Fig 3: Cueva de las Manos cave art from between 13000-9500 years ago (UNESCO, 2024)

In a similar fashion to walkway one, audience-members are invited to place their hands on the walls to create handprints as an homage to ancient cave art. As they are whisked onwards, they watch their handprints fade into the past.

Room Two: Fragility of the Human Condition

Alberto Giacometti's 'Man Falling'



Fig 4: Alberto Giacometti's 'Man Falling' (Klemm, 2001)

In contrast to the previous parts of the exhibition, this room will be stark white. This will contribute to the feeling of disorientating the audience. Giacometti's 'Man Falling' is one of his most slender and fragile figures, appearing to be on the precipice of falling from its pedestal. I want the audience to contemplate existentialist themes of relinquishing control and surrendering to the universe. Death is a certainty; how much is predetermined? 'Man Falling is a human being in precisely the extreme situation in which his transcendental destiny becomes apparent' (Klemm, 2001). This sculpture was made in the 1950s and the cultural landscape at the time was that of a crisis of meaning and an unsureness of who we are as humans after the horrors of WW2. Giacometti's rendition of the human form appears to be worn down, perhaps by time, leaving the core of what is left of a figure. It is singular, lonely, and on the brink of toppling. I hope for the audience to consider how fragile we all are when looking at this piece.

Room Three: Our Cosmic Nature
Wassily Kandinsky's 'Mouvement'



Fig 5: Wassily Kandinsky's 'Mouvement' Oil on Canvas

Kandinsky's "Mouvement", brings forth imagery of cosmic movement. The vibrant colours against the dark background seem to vibrate with energy. For this reason the work will be presented amongst projected copies of the work that have been animated; the walls will be black and the projected shapes will dance around on the walls. I want the audience to be filled with a playful but powerful sense of the energy that makes up all and everything. I want them to feel small, like one of the dots in the painting, part of the larger dance of life. The painting's composition has been painstakingly considered, with the colours and forms chosen according to Kandinsky's ideas of inherent spiritual meaning to communicate directly with the viewer's soul (Kandinsky, 1977). Undoubtedly Kandinsky's art cannot be untied from his experience of synesthesia, a condition in which one's senses blend together. 'Each true painting is poetry. For poetry is not made solely by use of words, but also by colours, organised and composed; consequently, painting is a pictorial poetic creation... The source of both languages is the same; they share the same root: intuition – soul' said Kandinsky (1938).

Room Four:

Jurriaan de Vos & Gemma Luz Bosch's 'Aircilla' Sound Installation

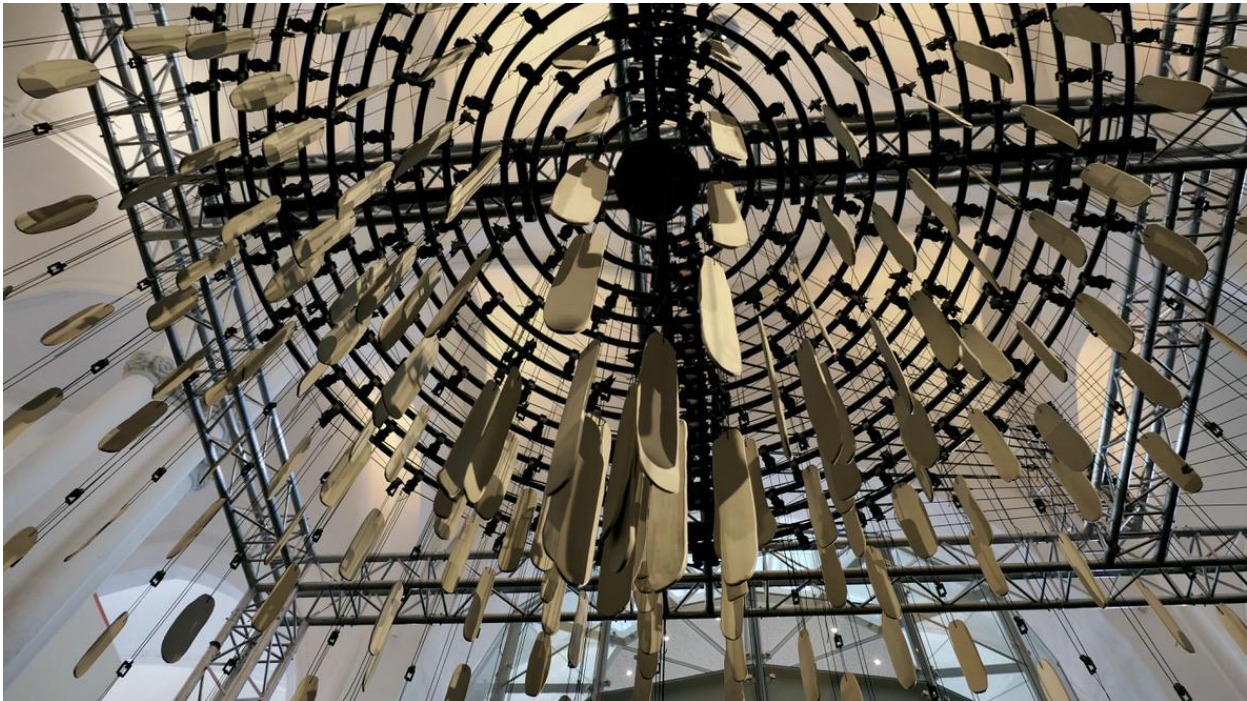


Fig 6: Aircilla Ceramic Sound Installation Museum Speelkolk 2021- Jurriaan de Vos & Gemma Luz Bosch

Video Link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=URQuHSR7N_I&ab_channel=GemmaLuzBosch

This ceramic sounds installation is suspended so that the audience can stand beneath it. The floor in this room is covered in cushions and the audience are invited to lay down below the installation, as if star-gazing, looking up to a projected night-sky meteor shower that harmonises with the movement of the suspended ceramic pieces. "Ceramic sound objects are put into motion by a big mechanism. The handmade and therefore unique sound objects swing and collide with each other, creating sound and timbres in their own way. With Aircilla we want to immerse the audience in a moving landscape" (Bosch, 2024). There is no rhythm to the sounds of the ceramic pieces hitting each other. Confronted with the night sky and incoherent sounds, the audience is reminded of how small they are and how confusingly intricate the connections in life can be. Seemingly unrelated things can have profound impacts (Lorenz, 1972). This ties to surrealist themes of breaking the constraints of the unconscious mind and embracing the randomness of it all.

Exit: Jumping into the Void

The journey ends on an absurdist note. The moving walkway will bring people to a platform off which they have to jump into a dark hole- 'the unknown'. There will be a hidden trampoline at the end.

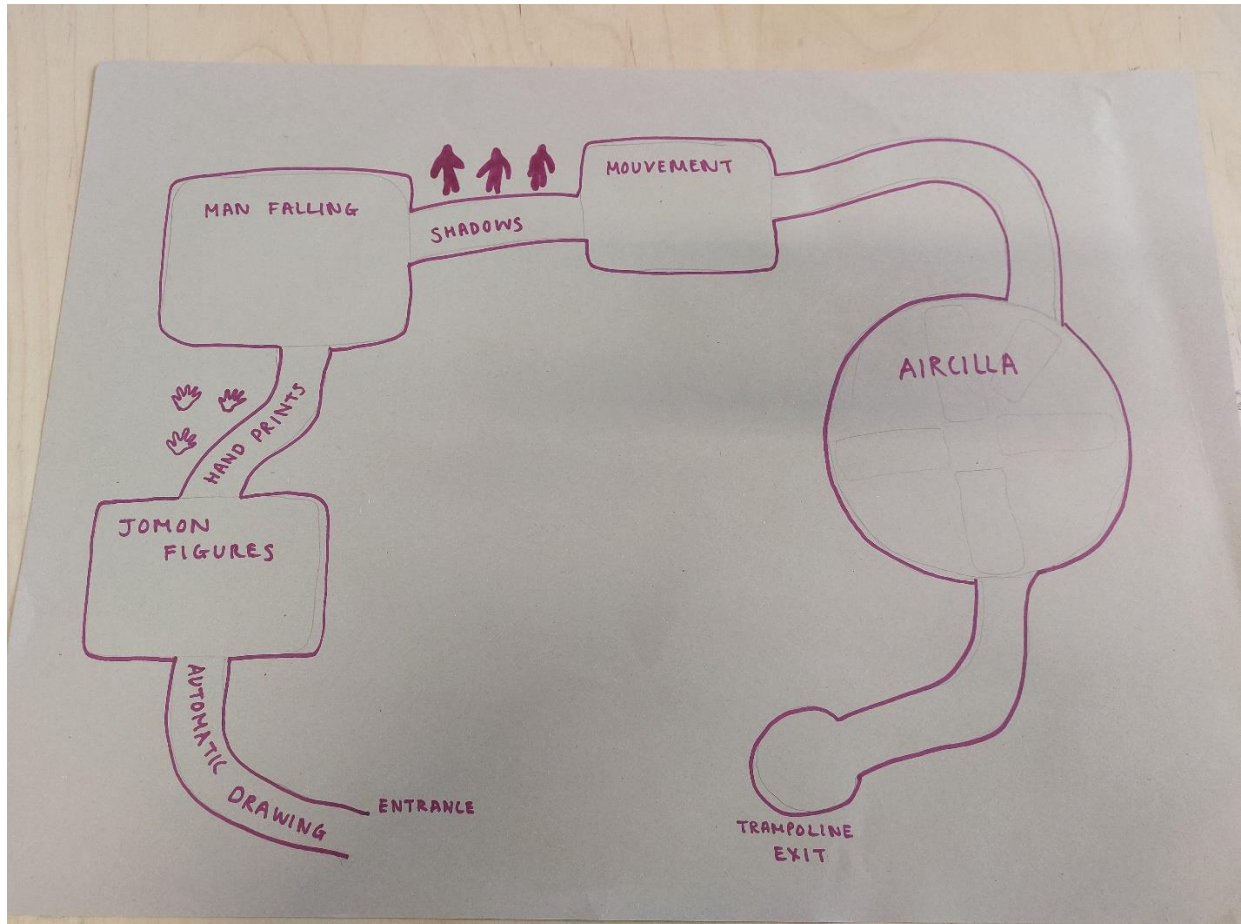


Fig 7: Map of Exhibition

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