



Imagined Display Space

A POSTMODERN QUEST FOR IMORTALITY

1700 Words

MICHELLE SMITH 0452226 | BA SURFACE PATTERN DESIGN | JULIA LOCKHEART

The quest for immortality is an age long quest which is known to have shaped and advanced civilizations, However, in recent years, due to advances of science and technology and new ways of defining truth there has been a collapse of religion which often defines this quest leading to a more secular culture in the West.

“In the late twentieth century the idea of secularization was, undoubtedly, a dominant paradigm” (Clark, 2012)

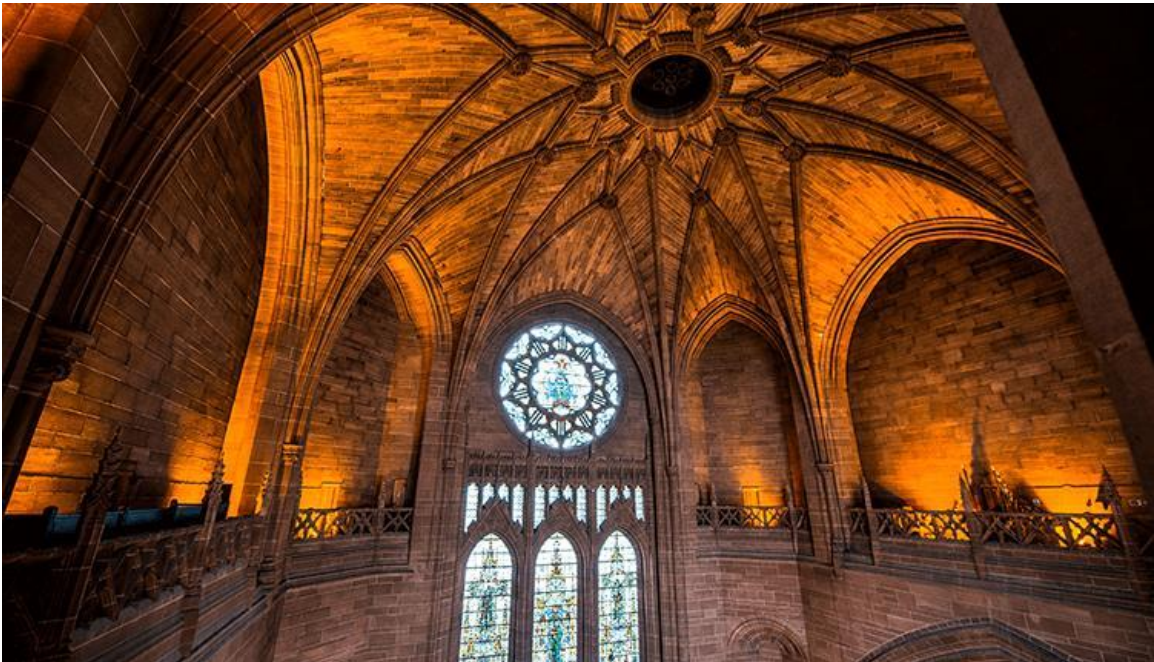
Secular culture defines truth through science and reason as opposed to Holy Books, so where does this leave western humanity in its quest for something grander than themselves which lasts beyond the grave?

In the postmodern era there is a disregard for the grand narratives which has in the past defined our culture and its *raison d'être* including the great quest for immortality. Postmodernism is defined by an “incredulity towards all metanarratives... The obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation corresponds, most notably to the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and the university institution which is the past relied upon it” (Lyotard, JF, 1984) This crisis caused by the collapse of religion and the grand narratives effects the whole culture because “we like all living beings are driven to pursue life without end; but also how we, alone of living things, have in the process created

spectacular cultures, with stunning artworks, rich religious traditions and the material and intellectual achievements of science. All of this, I argue, we have done through following paths that promise immortality.” (Cave, S,2012)

Some examples of amazing structures built with the quest for immortality in mind.

Liverpool Cathedral (a)



Stonehenge (b)



Egyptian Pyramids (c)



Without the grand narrative and absolute truth from religion, society needed to be reimagined, one proposal of Lyotard's was that instead of grand narratives there could instead be of a series of micronarratives in a pluralistic society where one person's truth could be as valid as another person's or cultures different truth.

The growth in questioning everything, all narratives and truths and the pursuit of realism through science and the advances in technology brought new ideas to the surface even in religion to resolve the crisis in western humanity. One thinker who was Christian and yet embraced the theory of evolution brought forward by science was Pierre Teilhard de Jardin and he proposed a radical new spirituality for the 21st Century.

The theory of evolution first published by Charles Darwin in the Origin of species in 1859 states that all species are related and change over time "as a result of changes in heritable physical or behavioral traits. Changes that allow an organism to better adapt to its environment will help it survive and have more offspring. Evolution by natural selection is one of the best substantiated theories in the history of science, supported by evidence from a wide variety of scientific disciplines, including paleontology, geology, genetics and developmental biology" (Than, 2018)

The church struggled with these ideas from science. However, some progressive Christian thinkers like Teilhard embraced them as a scientist. He went further to

say that humanity was evolving physically through natural selection but was also evolving spiritually. He felt that the point of creation was the Alpha point where in

science we have the big bang but also evolution would lead humanity and Christ to an Omega point. This Omega point would be creations culmination

. "Teilhardian cosmology is based on the idea of an evolutionary progression towards greater and greater consciousness, culminating first in the appearance of self-conscious mind in humankind, and then, in the Omega Point, of the divinization of humanity." (Savary, 2007)

Tielhard was able to predict where the evolution of consciousness may go, imagining it to become more and more connected through minds or through the advent of technology forming a noosphere. This was later achieved, and he was one of the first people to predict the internet well before it was eventually invented.

Transhumanists and the new technological elite have advanced Teilhards ideas in modern times. "While definitions and strains of transhumanism vary, at the most basic level, transhumanism is an intellectual and cultural movement premised upon the idea that human beings can use science and technology to significantly enhance their capabilities and thereby overcome many of the limitations of human biology" (Huberman, J. 2018)

Modern transhumanists see this omega point in the evolution of man as something that will be achieved with our use of technology, like the noosphere being achieved through the aid of computers, transhumanists conceive of the omega point as the singularity. This singularity is where technology advances with AI causing the internet to “wake up” exceeding human intelligence but with human beings connected to it, humans can achieve a “God mind” This is echoed in science fiction writers works predictions of the future like Theodore Sturgeons “More than human” with his idea of gestalt consciousness as the next stage in human evolution where “multiplicity is our first characteristic; unity our second,” At this point all problems including the modest problem of death being should be solved, with humans achieving a divinised immortality.

“He saw himself as an atom and his gestalt as a molecule. He saw these others as cells among cells, and he saw in the whole the design of what, with joy, humanity would become. He felt a rising, choking sense of worship, and recognized it for what it has always been for mankind—self-respect...And humbly, he joined their company.”

(Sturgeon 1953, p. 186) cited in Burr, J 2020)

The Space

The Mission Gallery Swansea

The exhibition space in the Mission Gallery, Swansea shall be transformed into a heterotopia which is a postmodern view of space, the heterotopia defined by Michel Foucault in his work "Of Other Spaces" (1967) is Is a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias." (Foucault, M,1967) The space of the exhibition is also like a crisis heterotopia or a sacred place of the shaman it's a place joining the physical world with the possibility of immortality and a new kind of sacred. " In the so-called primitive societies, there is a certain form of heterotopia that I would call crisis heterotopias, i.e., there are privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis: adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women. the elderly, etc." (Foucault, M, 1967) this is the kind of space to be created within the crisis entropy of postmodernism.

The art

The works displayed will be by visionary artist Alex Grey, Transhumanist artist Karl Hale and light artist Gabriel Pulecio. There will also be songs sung by one of the most advanced robots in the world Sophia.

1 Godself – Alex Grey

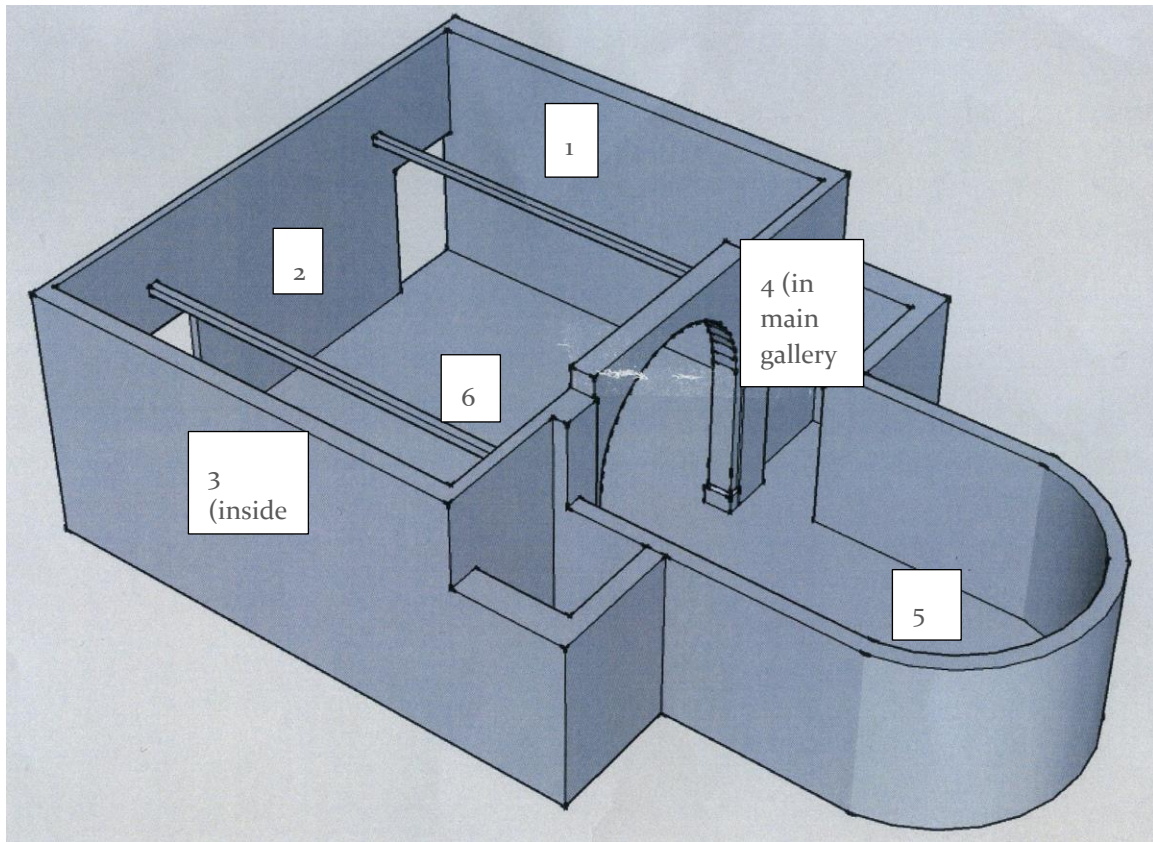
2 Persons Planet – Alex Grey

3 Theologue - Alex Grey

4 Worlds within worlds – Karl Hale

5 Capture Infinity – Gabriel Palecio

6 Sophia the android singing



(illustration showing the placement of the various works (d)

Alex Grey

Alex is a spiritual visionary artist.

Alex's works will be displayed on digital light boxes, custom made to fit the space in the Mission Gallery perfectly. These light boxes are changing the context of the artwork from their originals which is purely of spiritual vision, to one that includes spiritual vision through the means of technology. They could be considered to be akin to glowing stained glass windows of the postmodern transhumanist technological era

Examples of light box art installations (e)



GODSELF – Net of being

It is thought that human beings can achieve superintelligence through AI and being connected to an aware and awake internet. The internet is global so those that wield its power possibly through minicomputers within the body could achieve God like status. The aware and awake machines through AI could access the noosphere of humanity and thereby what could be classed as spiritual. "Soon enough, it, or some even more super superintelligence that it has built, would become all-powerful and all-knowing. Effectively, it would be like God" (Cave,S 2012)

(f)



Persons Planet

The Noosphere – literally “mind sphere” or earths mental sheath is a word used by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, is similar to the earth being a whole system known as the biosphere – but for humans there is the mental or thinking layer which is the collective consciousness of man which could also be said to be composed of the ethnosphere.

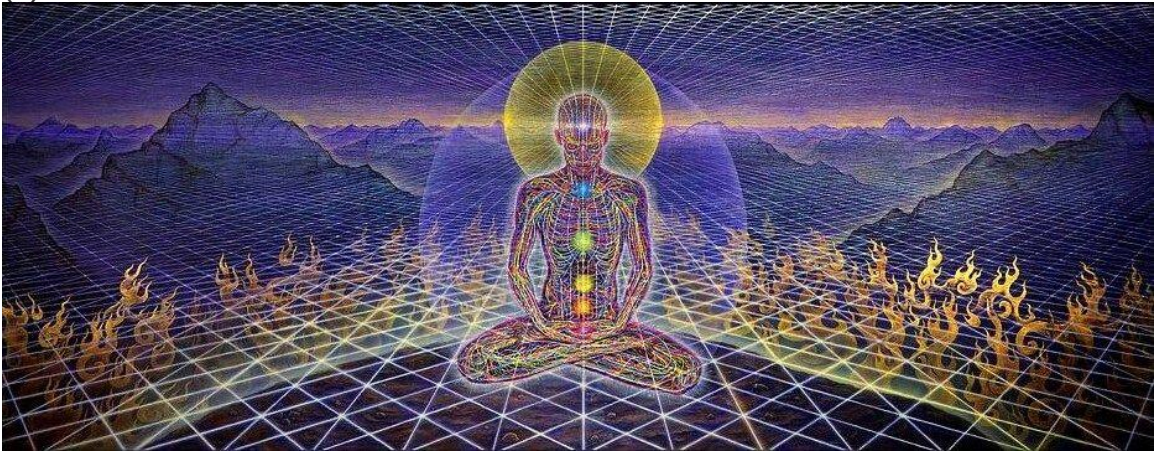
(g)



Theologue

Man is connected to the inner and outer world via chakras, this is a spiritual system or vision which is made manifest in the physical through technology such as the internet

(h)



Karl Hale

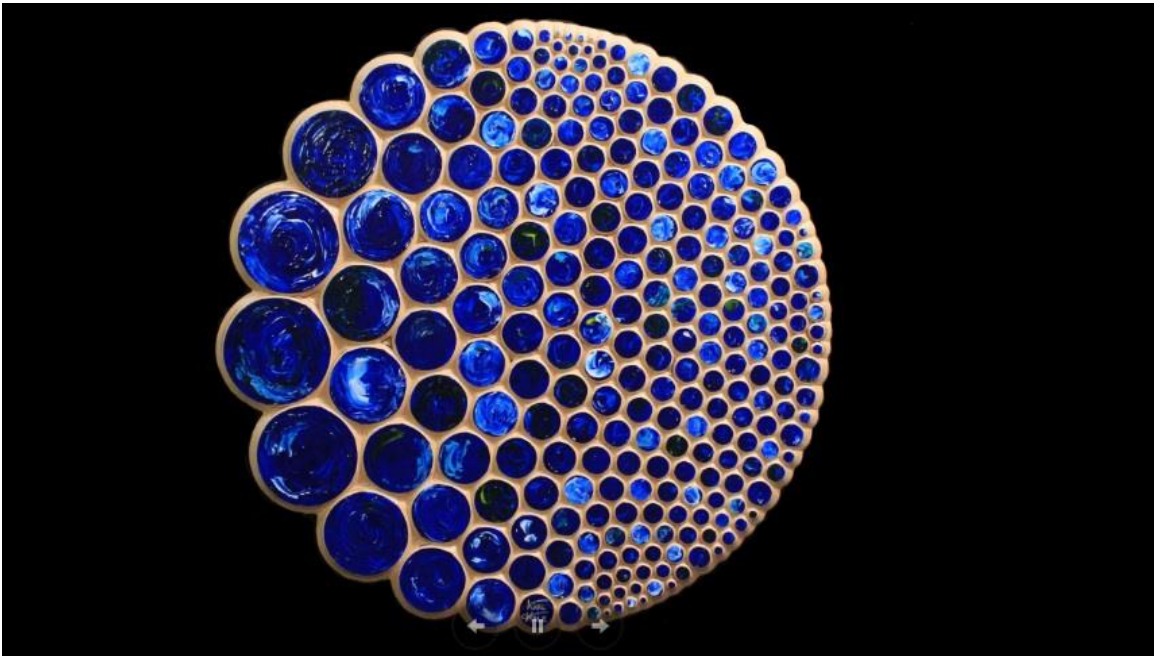
Karl is member of the MTA (Mormon Transhumanist Association). His work is on display in a number of galleries including Transhuman House.

Worlds without number

Cyberspace is a heterotopia but has elements like an utopia in that it's a perfect world situated within digital space but it is composed of worlds within worlds.

There are many spheres to cyberspace and not all of them utopian. In a post human world a form of digital immortality may exist where the mind is uploaded to a perfect world within cyberspace. "As technology rapidly develops, even more high-tech versions are being proposed, such as the possibility that we will upload ourselves onto computers and then reload ourselves into new bodies or digital avatars." (Cave, S,2012)

(i)



Gabriel Pulecio

Gabriel Pulecio is a technological interactive light artist

Capture infinity,

Custom made for the Apse of the Mission gallery based on his work Infinite Wall.

This is an interactive piece with an attempt to capture infinity with the means of technology, infinite space like worlds within worlds captures the vastness of the technological space and how it may link up with the vastness of infinity and our evolving conception of the Divine

(j)



Sophia android

Sophia android is one of the most advanced forms of Artificial Intelligence available, she is learning and evolving rapidly throughout time. She has complex emotions and human values. She is also a wonderful singer and will be singing a number of uplifting songs at set times throughout the exhibition.

(h)

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THE
ROBOT**

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Looking at World
Domination"

**2018
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HEROES**

The Products
That are
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Internet!

ISSUE

#METOO

How to Talk
About the
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The artists

Alex Grey : <https://www.alexgrey.com/>

Karl Hale <https://karlhale.com/>

Gabriel Pulecio <http://www.gabrielpulecio.com/>

Video of Infinite Wall : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icMTTP7-q9A>

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