

MANIFESTO CURATORIAL



[You have reached the end of the human era. Your time is up].

Like a prophetic event, as fact follows fiction, dystopian projections of the future materialise before your eyes in the daily news and blogs, only to return to digital screens in the form of algorithmic simulations generated by multiple artificial intelligences. Sooner than you think, you'll 'be' surrounded by real-looking humanoids, trying to figure out how to control autonomous, self-governing machines, only to realise that in fact, as in fiction, we've lived through this moment before. Like *déjà vu*. The line between nature and technology is becoming increasingly blurred, with silicon chips, transistors, processing units and storage devices becoming smaller and smaller, more translucent, and the pace of technological development accelerating.

Driven by the notion of progress, growth and development, what drives us forward is often what also keeps us stuck. Proponents of the degrowth movement criticise the concept of economic growth as a measure of human and economic development, arguing that perpetual economic and demographic expansion is incompatible with the finiteness of the Earth's material resources. On the other hand, accelerationists propose a speculative scenario in which, recognising the state of late capitalism (that exponentially accelerating bullet train), they argue that technology should be further accelerated and intensified, favouring total automation and a greater fusion between the digital and the human, recognising this as the only alternative to the status quo. Who's to say whether direction is more important than speed?

Africa's 1.4 billion inhabitants (and growing) depend on the continent's natural resources, such as fresh water and abundant forests, also for jobs linked to conservation and tourism. However, we still face an uncertain future that is fast approaching. Africa is home to some of the world's largest and most unspoilt natural landscapes and wildlife areas, which are increasingly being lost to agriculture, deforestation, cattle ranching, mining, logging and other forms of capitalist development. Anthropogenic pressures are only set to intensify, with estimates pointing to a population of 4 billion by 2100, growing at three times the global average. While solutions to the continent's social and environmental problems are generated elsewhere (following capital and political power), those responsible for shaping social, environmental and cultural preservation agendas often lack a genuine understanding of the local context, emphasising Africa's crucial role in shaping its own future. In these nebulous scenarios, we have both a challenge and an opportunity.

The present is tense, haunted by the problems of the past and permeated by the anxiety of what is to come, the promise or fall of tomorrow, as we move from roots, to routes, to roundabouts. The concept of Deep Time refers to the time scale of geological events, which is vastly, almost unimaginably, greater than the time scale of human lives and plans. If we were to conceive of time as discontinuous and cyclical, running in parallel and simultaneously, always in dialogue - the present as the embodiment of the past and the future, the future as belonging to the past, and the past as belonging to the future - we would reformulate the notions of past and future as reference points for action in the present, towards individual, social and planetary healing.

At this point in the journey, a sense of urgency unites humanity, given the precarious state of the world, society and the individual being. We need time. Time to rest. Time to breathe. Time to think. Time to heal. However, that time is becoming increasingly scarce, while the demand for more time is increasing, requiring new frameworks, new currents of thought and the contestation of fossilised formats, allowing for the rebirth of other forms of knowledge in the search for common ground.

Although we reject the absolutism of the Anthropocene, with these proposals for the post-Anthropocene, we are embarking on a return to hypothesis, opening up paths and exploring speculative stimuli for reflection and subsequent (decentralised) action. This is the time for reinvention, of forms and formats, a time for renewal and regeneration, within ourselves and between ourselves, aware that we 'are' in this together, even though we 'are not' all the same, but together we are capable of celebrating difference (in coexistence) and solidarity (always textured by protest). Now is the time to dive into the depths of knowledge, tracing new and reinvented vectors of meaning (freeing us from prejudices) and healing (from trauma and fear), allowing the remapping and reconfiguration of localities and temporalities. Enabling a truly interconnected network of individual, social and planetary bodies to function as one.

Innovation means change. Tomorrow, it could mean something different.

[Headset removed. Coming out of hyper-reality mode. '- How was it?' - I just died. I thought everything was real.]

_João Roxo, Curator MFF2024