ever elusive
thirty years of transmediale
2 Feb – 5 Mar 2017
HKW and various venues, Berlin

Conference Program

The conference of ever elusive – thirty years of transmediale *explores how information systems and hybrid techno-ecologies have worked to destabilize the centrality of the human. The program presents new notions of subjectivity as well as of accounting for the increasing role of the nonhuman.*

In today's accelerated condition, it is often difficult to tell where the role of the human ends and that of the machine begins. With machine learning systems, artificial intelligent agents, smart infrastructures, and engineered organisms playing an increasingly important role, new complex techno-ecologies and hybridities continuously evolve. These new entanglements, where technology is felt as natural and mediation becomes immediate, influence the shaping of the economic and socio-political condition, while putting the primacy of human agency into question. How familiar—and how strange—is this becoming autonomous and becoming environmental of technology to its users? How can these emerging machinic ecologies be used and whom can they favor? Which new forms of digital hegemony are being embraced when some actors are filtered or left out of the picture?

Taking these questions as its starting points, the conference of the anniversary edition of transmediale 2017 *ever elusive* aims to highlight and discuss the different forms of agency that are being involved in today's fast evolving techno-medial environments and constellations. It delves into various in-between spaces and zones of mediation, consisting of devices, programs, artificial entities, and human involvement, and discusses our role within them. It explores what the challenge of "decentering the human" might mean, taking into consideration optimistic scenarios as well as critical engagements and possible alternatives that might embrace new ways of perceiving the nonhuman.

Of primary importance for this exploration is the notion of the "middle," used in a way that is twofold. The "middle," on one hand, describes the complex and multifaceted "in-between" spaces of mediation and agency that result when media expand everywhere, and, on the other, it refers to the repositioning of our role within them. It is used to discuss how by being part of today's algorithmic filterings and strange ecologies, we inescapably find ourselves in ongoing processes of mediation, and it also underlines the necessity of acknowledging the multiplicity and heterogeneity of such a spaces. With its non-centrality, it holds the potential for transversal practices across sciences, politics, and aesthetics to be initiated.

Following this approach, the speakers of this year's conference are invited to discuss the changing roles of human and nonhuman agency, addressing this constant middleness and in-betweenness. Theoretical contextualizations, methodologies, practices, and ethics are introduced following three particular directions, three different "middles" as the main conference thematic contexts: *The Elemental Middle* explores the infrastructural and environmental character of today's media technologies, revisiting the fundamental relationship of culture to nature; *The Alien Middle* focuses on the strange and obscure character of today's mediated environments and re-examines the connection of the human with the machinic; and *The Middle to Come* emphasizes the subtle and sovereign character of today's mediation, focusing on the emergence of digital colonialism and digital populism, but also underlines the possibilities of other temporalities and spatialities that can formulate what is yet to come.

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Participants:

Roel Roscam Abbing, Bager Akbay, Morehshin Allahyari, Heba Y. Amin, Friederike Anders, Laurie Anderson, Marie-Luise Angerer, Aristide Antonas, Luiza Prado & Pedro Oliveira (A Parede), Clemens Apprich, Ayhan Ayteş, Tatiana Bazzichelli, Josh Berson, Ryan Bishop, Željko Blaće, Rasheedah Phillips & Moor Mother (Black Quantum Futurism Collective), Ben Bogart, Andreas Broeckmann, Christophe Bruno, Finn Brunton, Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, Geoff Cox, Florian Cramer, Matthew Creasey, Critical Media Lab Basel (Jamie Allen, Flavia Caviezel, Johannes Bruder, Shintaro Miyazaki, Yvonne Volkart, Moritz Greiner-Petter), Michael Dieter, Valie Djordjevic, Constant Dullaart, Arjon Dunnewind, Maria Eriksson, Alejandro Esguerra, Olle Essvik, Paul Feigelfeld, Natalie Fenton, Rasmus Fleischer, Fran Gallardo, Maya Indira Ganesh, Dov Ganchrow, Sarah Garcin, David Gauthier, Annette Gilbert, Abelardo Gil-Fournier, Gavin Mendel-Gleason, Sophia Gräfe, Gabriele Gramelsberger, Richard Grusin, Seda Gürses, Adam Harvey, Darsha Hewitt, Hexagram (Thierry Bardini, Orit Halpern, WhiteFeather Hunter, Garrett Lockhart, Chris Salter, Ida Toft), John Hill, Erich Hörl, Joey Holder, Brian House, Nathan Jones, Geraldine Juárez, Floris Kaayk, Theun Karelse, Valentina Karga, Nora N. Khan, Grada Kilomba, Paul Kolling, Kuang-Yi Ku, Steve Kurtz, Diann Bauer & Patricia Reed (Laboria Cuboniks), Adrian Lahoud, Esther Leslie, Olia Lialina, Geert Lovink, Alessandro Ludovico, Jonas Lund, Ewa Majewska, Nicolas Malevé, Diana McCarty, Emma McCormick-Goodhart, Rosa Menkman, Koert van Mensvoort, An Mertens, Alan Mills, Martino Morandi, Michael Murtaugh, Tahani Nadim, Gerald Nestler, Michael Ohl, Sebastian Olma, Jussi Parikka, Lisa Parks, Matteo Pasquinelli, Paolo Patelli, Peggy Pierrot, Sascha Pohflepp, Søren Pold, Helen Pritchard, Johannes Paul Raether, Miriam Rasch, Søren Rasmussen, Renée Ridgway, Linda Hilfling Ritasdatter, Jara Rocha, Daniel Rourke, Dorothy R. Santos, Sebastian Schmieg, Brett Scott, Paul Seidler, Sarah Sharma, Sam Skinner, Eric Snodgrass, Marie Louise Juul Søndergaard, Winnie Soon, Florian Sprenger, Felix Stalder, Baruch Gottlieb & Dmytri Kleiner (Telekommunisten), Daniel Tirado, Suzanne Treister, Magda Tyzlik-Carver, UBERMORGEN, Marloes de Valk, Giuditta Vendrame, Peter-Paul Verbeek, Patrick Vonderau, Jutta Weber, Leanne Wijnsma, Elvia Wilk, Krystian Woznicki, Ebru Yetişkin