

TALKS, NARRATIVES, CONSULTATIONS ON INFINITY

The final disposal site. Martin Donat, anti-nuclear activist and occupational therapist, Free Republic of Wendland

Atomic waste is the materialised human hubris of 20th-century technology. What began 70 years ago with the infernal Nazi uranium project and the apocalyptic dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, results in – logically and almost inevitably – the boundless self-overestimation of a safe “final disposal site” or even the human-made “transmutation” of the elements. Man, who has ignited the sun’s fire on earth, considers himself godlike and superior to creation. Because he was once capable of capturing the dimension of the eternal through the technologies of physics, man has fallen for a grandiose delusion: in practice it has become clear that the works of the mortal once again penetrate into this temporal world and do so within a human life...

We close our eyes and see a swarm of birds. Ivana Franke, visual artist, Zagreb/Berlin

Installation, wood construction, polystyrene, LED lamps, frequency range 12 – 33 Hz, length: 6'24''

You enter the tubes, sit down and close your eyes. Initiated through a flashlight-dramaturgy, spaces and images appear to move in ways which have no correspondence whatsoever to reality and which we have not retrieved from memory. We are obviously seeing the reactions of our neuronal structure to light stimulation – a phenomenon that science is also unable to explain. Something becomes visible that is invisible. Bright shadows of our brain. The boundaries between inside and outside appear to dissolve, one experiences a rupturing of individual perception that plunges us into the hallucination of an experience of the present. And this experience is subjective, incomparable and cannot be proven.

Seven times eternity. Petra Gehring, professor for philosophy at the Technical University Darmstadt.

Seven talks á 20 min.

The philosopher describes seven forms of eternity and the corresponding social figures: 1. The unbounded future, the unlimited continuity of time (e.g. Plato). Figure: the unchallenged adult // 2. The halting of time in a moment of intensive experience of the present (e.g. Nietzsche). Figure: the enchanted // 3. Fixating the transient through material preservation (e.g. stone, marble, granite, gold, platinum). Figure: the guard // 4. The total presence of all, the omniscience and omnipotence of God (e.g. Augustine). Figure: the sage // 5. Cycle and eternal recurrence, fate in the tragic sense (e.g. Nietzsche). Figure: the hero // 6. The deferral, perpetual dying (e.g. Hegel). Figure: the ascetic, the hurried // 7. Variation of the same, paralysing tedium (e.g. Dracula, de Sade). Figure: the dandy and the cynic.

Big ban. Rainer Gruber, physicist, dissertation on quantum field theory, Munich.

3 Talks á 20 min.

With the special relativity theory, the single, universal time geared to eternity

splintered into inherent times; simultaneously, space and time coalesce into space-time. The thesis of the big bang derived from the general relativity theory enabled physics to ascribe a beginning and a conceivable end to space-time. But eternity as a concept is essentially embedded in deeper layers of physics. It has its roots in the fascination of the Pre-Socratics with the permanent, the existing – with what remains the same throughout all change – and is expressed in the laws of conservation which became the basis of classical physics and have achieved experimental triumphs in the symmetry concept of elementary particles. Meanwhile, the general relativity theory profoundly questions this concept.

Consultancy on Transhumanism. Stefan Lorenz Sorgner, author and director of the Beyond Humanism Network, Leipzig

Human immortality is a utopia frequently discussed in the context of transhumanism. Immortality should be seen less as a eu-topia (Ancient Greek: the good place) to be practically realised but rather as an ouk-topia (Ancient Greek: non-place), a human longing whose fulfilment is not realistically expected but plays a rhetorical function. Whoever speaks of immortality is assured of public attention, because human mortality represents a challenge for all of us. Three variants of transhumanism are particularly relevant here: 1. cryonics, mind uploading and the silicon-based transhumanism; 2. human evolution, genetic enhancement and the carbon-based transhumanism; 3. human advancement with respect to the span of health.

Shudder of eternity. Wladimir Velminski, art and media historian at the ETH Zürich

The premiere of an unpublished radio play: enshrouded in the sound of electromagnetic waves we head into the year 8888 (the year of the four reversed infinities) and are witness to a mysterious fateful encounter between a famous architect and the ruler of Russia, the Golden Child. The question is if eternity is a place of authority that humans can only glimpse in the act of subjugation and what role is assigned to the 'eternal organon'. The radio play is based on the drawings of Suprematism-inspired futuristic architecture, which the Russian artist, author, nomad and founder of the group "Medical Hermeneutics Inspection", Pavel Pepperstein exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2009.

Ars Memoria. Training exercise. Dorothee Wenner, filmmaker and curator, Berlin & Hannah Hurtzig

It seems to be certain that one can only enter eternity through one's own death. Then one reaches perhaps the other side or a place, Hades, the underworld, the inferno, Arcadia, paradise, or one remains in limbo, in an interim zone. If we assume that eternity is a place of remembrance, an auratic place in the memory, a curious web out of time and space where closeness and distance enter a strange connection: how can one spend eternity at this place? The exercise offers a special mnemonic technique for eternity. The exercise draws on a film, one of the most beautiful films ever made on the theme of the afterlife: *After Life (A Wonderful Life)* by the Japanese director Hirokazu Koreeda from 1989.