

26th IAA SYMPOSIUM ON SPACE AND SOCIETY (E5)
 Contemporary Arts Practice and Outer Space: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach (4)

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ECOLOGIES OF SPACE

Abstract

Over the past years I have artistically investigated objects like the Shuttle Program or Space Colonies, exploring relationships between space, the short history of its exploration and earthly realities, from geopolitical transformations to everyday life. Space is as much a physical fact as it is an imaginary giant screen for human projections, it's vast and void, yet full of stuff. Or, deliberately misreading philosopher Graham Harman: "In short, space is the name for the fact that things fail to be in direct contact without being outside all contact entirely." The photo of the Blue Marble is probably the best known link between the exploration of space and ecological thinking. But while there is a long line between the deadly "environment of space and living systems that can be traced back to Tsiolkovsky's sketches of extraterrestrial greenhouses, recent reconceptualizations of Ecology facilitate a framework to think beyond networks of living systems:

the Moon landing and the first zombie film, a former Nazi delivering humanity's first greeting to Alien civilizations, a test for space settlements in the Arizona desert, the debris of two Shuttle disasters and Cargo Cults, NASA photo AS17-148-22727 and the iPhone, 1970s space colony illustrations, Reagan and the L5-Society, meteorites on eBay YouTube

– these are some objects of my artistic projects since 2006. Using media like installation, film, text and performance I have researched the manifold relationships between outer space and social realities on our planet, the exploration of the universe and the rather earthly transformations of political landscapes as much as everyday life. Bruno Latour and object-oriented theories suggest a concept of Ecology that transgresses the separation of nature and society: Through my extensive research about the history of closed systems for space settlements, like the Biosphere 2 experiment, I'm especially interested in this broader understanding of ecology – including not only biological relationships, but also socio-political aspects, culture, economy or technology. Following this idea, I would like to present some examples of my work outlining ecologies of space: a spectral network of human and nonhuman actors, from the tallest cliff of the Solar System to the fall of the Berlin Wall or the list of things above.