

The Tunnel Presents

Manifesto

Pre-alpha release

Current contributors

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*"Whenever we have spoken openly we have
said nothing. But where we have written
something in code and pictures we have
concealed the truth."*

Rosarium Philosophorum (1550)

Evolution and the New Ecology

From the perspective of geological time, humanity is still in the midst of its origin story. For over a hundred millennia as we have fought through catastrophe and war, through predation and disease, through nightmare and genocide, to find ourselves the most dominant species on earth. But it is a Pyrrhic victory.

Humans are not destroying nature so much as replacing it. Just as the early elements of the cosmos were created in the heart of stars, humanity's role in evolutionary history seems to be to create and synthesise new arrangements and forms of matter that have never before existed. Our exponential growth over the last few centuries - in which we turned the ancient starlight of hydrocarbons into more and more minds and machines - has irreversibly transformed the natural world.

It is only as we wake that we realise the full extent of what we have done to the world. Even as we try to salvage what remains of nature, through conservation, de-extinction and geo-engineering - we replace another part of it, a process that will end in its complete displacement. Eventually, in the coming centuries and millennia, few remnants of the Old Ecology - nonhuman wilderness - will remain untouched by this New Ecology. There will be sadness and mourning at such accelerating extinction, but there is no going back to the Garden. We stand now in the ruins of the Old Ecology, the dying world of our cultural childhood, and forward through radio telescopes and particle accelerators future that is still to take form. We have increasing control over our evolutionary destiny, wielding information about our cosmic habitat to channel the forces of energy and matter. Searing structure into chaos.

The growth of secular scientific ideologies exposed a world in which our entire existence is on a pale blue dot adrift in an ocean of infinity; instances of an incomprehensible stew of energy and matter devoid of moral truths. That we spiral through a dead cosmos, devoid of inherent meaning, with our very being reduced to the briefest instant of consciousness between two eternities of oblivion.

In his last television interview, Heidegger said that "Only a god can save us now". Typical of his cryptic poetry, Heidegger is not literally meaning that a God is required, but rather a new unifying idea that will save us from technologically enabled nihilism; a new paradigm that will imbue the world again with meaning. A new story.

Our species that survived at least one super-volcano, armed with no more than with stone age tools. Whatever future awaits us, or not, this is not the end. It is merely the end of the beginning. Only now, on the verge of this epochal winter, do we stop for breath to look back at our epic journey, from primates to gods, and attempt to take stock of where we are going next.

The story of our next hundred thousand years is yet to be written, has yet to be told. But who will get to write it? For the story we tell ourselves now, at this pivotal moment in our evolutionary history, will forever change who we will become.

Jamie Stanton (2015)

"Artists to my mind are the real architects of change, and not the political legislators who implement change after the fact."

William S. Burroughs

The Artist as Mirror

Most artists are involved in a constant re-valuation of their values and perception at all times - through the creation of works and the mysterious and magical process of creation. As artists we must catch up with the developments and progress of the 21st and steer the world towards a more creative, ecological and open vision. Modernism in the 20th century bred triumphs of human creativity and ingenuity but also many disasters.

What then have we learnt?

Each artist must find their method, wherever it be the portrait or video, painting or databending, to maintain the chaos at the heart of their ideas within a controllable malleable framework. The methods must be determined by the artists themselves, it will come from no-where else.

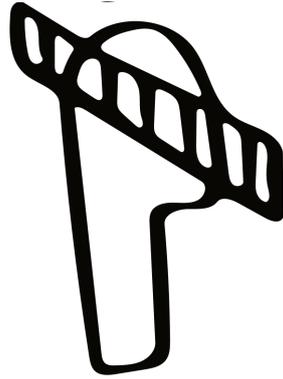
In consumer culture difference is sneered at or attacked, the individual exists as an outsider. The group are told what to absorb and process, and in terms of culture it is only what is popular and accessible. The only true individuality is creative thinking, and everyone is capable of this. Consumerism provides intellectual freedom, However the information gathered is largely disposable, it is not retained for long because of the means of its transmission.

The only thing that has solidity of mass is fine art and everything connected to it. Everything else is just a shadow or an impression. We can create free thinkers or radicals through a direct, pure transmission of ideas, that does not rely on capitalist constructs.

Artists must synthesise masculine and feminine perspectives to generate the wider perspective required by the challenges of this new century by rejecting codified and sanctified, hierarchical notions of gender. Artists must gaze deeply and honestly into their selves so as to overcome the guilt, shame and anxiety that comes from being aware of the complexities of human nature, transforming these negative states into art. Overcoming repressive world-views and constructs is the first challenge to seeing possibilities for better worlds manifest.

To admit our flaws and to transcend them into a world of meaningful connections, the ultimate trip to the other side - our authentic selves on the other side of the mirror. The Unification of science, spirit and art.

Chris Godber and Mathew Tudor (2015)



Goals

Cultivate a culture that has a less parasitic and more symbiotic relationship with the natural world. An optimal balance between human survival and human contentment.

To utilize non traditional spaces as platforms for ideas. To exist outside of the accepted gallery system.

To work on projects collaboratively. To take one fully formed idea (from any collective member) and use it as a base or platform to build up something more complex and challenging. Something that exists outside of our individual practice. In an attempt to undermine the ego of the individual artist and create a unified language of forms.

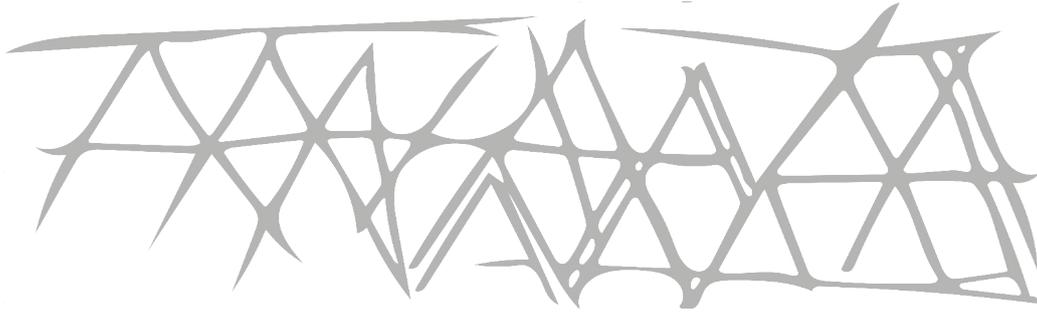
To promote and actively engage in the disruption of traditional conceptions of public and private space, to bring art to the public sphere, to create ideas for new forms of museums based around generating meaningful collaborative incoherence! To create visionary landscapes of the mind made real, to reveal the 'active' subconscious and translate them into concrete reality via VR / Augmented reality / Film / Painting / Poetry / Sound / Multimedia and performance. Strive for new media, strive for new forms of representation of complexity and search for novelty in everything.

To tell humanity a new story.

Insert contribution here

The Tunnel Pre-Alpha Manifesto is an evolving project.
If you are a member of The Tunnel we would like to
contribute, please contact us.

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First known symbol carved in external media by human hand, from the "Blombos Ochre". c.80,000 BCE

The Engines of Culture

Judging by some archeological evidence, Symbolic communication may go back as far as 300,000 years; its endurance due to the fact that it was both functional in aiding our survival and meaningful in that it let us explore deeper facets of our nature long before language had matured or even evolved. In aiding our survival, this primordial information technology and symbolic thought came to be fundamental to human consciousness.

The inner states initially communicated may have been emotional ones, the sound of the subconscious, a language using the symbolic vocabulary of the artist, a language of forms externalising an internal vision.

Historically, the role of the artist was once an important one. For example during the counter reformation artists were highly prized not only were they the storytellers of their day, they were also used as political tools.

The Catholic Church realised the importance of art as propaganda and the impact this had on individuals and so did the protestants. This led to the Baroque period whereby art was aimed at the senses and the Catholic message took centre stage. The protestants' vandalism of art and artefacts did undermine its role but it only made it more prominent.

The modern artist can simply be occupying a space in time and attempting to create structure through the inanimate objects within a given room. Like a prisoner standing in a cell for the first time, he or she is only aware of the objects within that space; a table, chair, toilet and wash basin, this is how the prisoner calculates time. The Mirror (if available) is the preparation for escape, or quite simply the movement from one level of awareness to the next.

Mathew Tudor with contributions by Jamie Stanton (2015)

*"Science Finds
Industry Applies
Man Conforms"*

Slogan of the 1933 Chicago World Fair

Order and Chaos

Cultures throughout human history have made sense of the world in terms of order and chaos. To the ancient Egyptians order was personified in Ra, and maintained by the Pharaoh via Ma'at; eternal laws that if followed correctly ensured both social and cosmic stability. His rival was the chaos god Apophis, the underworld serpent intent on the destruction of the state and with it, the universe.

In Hindu thought it is Vishnu that represents order and structure of religion, and Shiva who represents destruction and chaos, manifest in his cosmic dance of the Nataraja that signals eternal cycles of creation and destruction. In Greek religion it was Eris, goddess of discord, who's gift of a golden apple started a chain of events that brought down Troy and Mycenae.

Today, extreme order is signified in the vision of techno-priests whose dreams of completely ordered societies and smart megacities. Its conception of chaos the Black Swan. There's a saying in the world of management along the lines of "what isn't measured can't be managed". The logical consequence of this is that if everything is measured, as it soon will be in our Internet-of-Things / Smart City habitat, then everything can be managed.

And if we're moving towards a society that's collectively measuring everything that happens to at least six billion people, every movement, word and heartbeat—indeed, every mouthful of food—we ought to pause for a moment and think though the potential consequences of all this before we "press start". The urge to control both our material and social environment is a gravity well to which society seems to descend, but this force exerted by extreme order will always be met with a rebound to extreme chaos. Order enforced without consent of those it is imposed on will always be unstable.

Therefore any critique of order must go beyond that of just neoliberalism or the structure of the moment to any ordered hierarchical and crystallised structure that takes too extreme and monolithic a form. Societies thrive in flowing-balance, at the thriving midpoint between these two extremes. Chaos, while pregnant for opportunity and change, carries no guarantees as to what new structures or order will eventually remerge and how extreme a form it will take.

Jamie Stanton (2015)