

# Editors Editorial

01/02

Art cannot solve the problems of 2017, Alexander Kluge says to Hans Ulrich Obrist in this issue, but it can start solving the problems of 2036. Though it may begin in the affective work of mourning, art moves towards a rational archeology and a realistic anticipation. We could call this “futurist realism,” a vision of the coming decades as a series of problems to be solved, rather than as a source for transcendent salvations or damnations of whatever fashion. Unlike the ecstatic or dispirited futurisms we are accustomed to, futurist realism looks forward with no false regrets. Bad-faith futurism, by contrast, is exemplified by those who, at the moment of Occidental eclipse, cynically claim the bankruptcy of that which the Occident never stood for in the first place. Yuk Hui argues that these men – and they are all men – are trapped in a moment of “unhappy consciousness,” wallowing in feelings of loss rather than conceptualizing the global changes taking place around them. Feelings, Hui reminds us, are a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for knowledge. Without this understanding, neoreactionary melancholia quickly gives way to Silicon Valley–inspired “sinofuturist” fantasies that project a fantastically smooth, anti-political existence onto an entirely polymorphous set of cultures and histories.

In “Asian Futurism and the Non-Other,” Xin Wang draws on the work of the novelist Liu Cixin to show that the same recuperative approach underlies art-world attempts to represent other cultures as other. In the same way that, for the neoreactionaries, Asian cultures happen to perfectly fill in the holes they see in the Western fabric, so too do teams of art luminaries scour the globe in search of what is exotic by that same standard. In both cases, an apparent focus on the non-Occidental in fact preserves the Occident at the center of the story. The alternative, Wang avers, would be to recognize things for what they are. Under such conditions, productions like the Hollywood version of *Ghost in the Shell* would “just be a regional homage to the Japanese classic.” Meanwhile, Vivian Ziherl, in “The Fourfold Articulation,” continues to deepen her own engagement with the significance of the frontier for the metropolitan imaginary, reanimating the Marxist – or is it Maoist? – conception of “articulation” to describe the work of thinking and representing the in-between.

Providing a concrete history of just how the inside enlists the outside to project its own stability, Chen Chieh-jen discusses the overlapping imperialist histories of Taiwan’s Losheng Sanatorium and how these relate to his

e-flux journal #81 — april 2017 Editors  
Editorial

own work as an artist and filmmaker. The movement to save the sanatorium becomes a struggle to articulate – that word again – an adequate testimony to the character of everyday life in the twenty-first century. This emphasis on the importance of listening to images is underlined by Arthur Jafa and Tina Campt, who discuss movement, motion, dance, Christian sectarianism, and the mechanics of empathy in “Love is the Message, the Plan is Death.” What do we owe images of suffering? And how does the scale of our encounter with representation change our experience and understanding of life and death? Elizabeth Povinelli revisits this theme to offer a glimpse of the deep history behind the institutionalization of the distinction between life and nonlife.

Finally, David Morris gives us the history of the autonomous Russia-based Cold War collective APTART as an example of one way that art practice has tried to solve a certain kind of problem in the past. By running together the Russian and English words for art, APTART reminds us that we are never without resources for crossing even the most well-defended of our inherited frontiers.

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