

IZJAVA ZA MEDIJE (12 January 2021)

KIBLIX 2020—2021: Virtual Worlds Today

International Festival of Arts, Technology and Science

2020—2021

Location: www.kiblix.org

In line with KIBLA's long-term research focus on Extended Reality (XR) technologies, and considering that 2020 is and was the most 'virtual year' to date, the curatorial team consisting of Živa Kleindienst, Tadej Vindiš, Peter Tomaž Dobrila, and Aleksandra Kostič, is for this year's KIBLIX asking, **what are the virtual worlds now?**

This is not the question of technology as magic, but the critical evaluation of the intersections and disconnections between the virtual and the physical. On one side, we are faced with a persistent ambition of industry towards persuasive technologies, designing the virtual to fully assume, control, and subsume the physical, while on the other, we are constantly needing to mitigate technological incompatibility with the physical as such. KIBLIX 2020—2021 therefore places the experience of the human at the centre – with their material limitations and socio-political conditions of the body – while understanding the virtual environments as spaces for speculative realities, variable identities, and ever more acute social transformations.

Program

December 2020

The International Festival of Arts, Technology, and Science KIBLIX started in December 2020 with the establishment of [a new online platform](#), which also acts as a shop window of the [RUK network](#). The festival began with an online presentation of Kibla's intermedia productions of art research projects, virtual landscape *Sfera3: Infrastruktura* by **Tanja Vujinović (SI)**, participatory design research project *Skiljelinjer (Lines of Demarcation)* by **studio Untold Garden (Max Čelar (SI), Jakob Skote (SE))** in collaboration with **Sebastian Dahlqvist (SE)**, a first-person 360-degree recording of **Mark Farid's** project *Seeing I: The Other*, Anže Sever's (SI) sound spatial installation *Field / Pressure*, and Valerie Wolf Gang's (SI) mixed reality research project *Love Machine*. There were also online downloads of projects by Igor Štromajer *Igor Štromajer's Conversation with Igor Štromajer*, Vlado Repnik's *The Last Temptation* and Extended Circulation *2 A Machine for Improving the World (2. part of the series)*.

The program continued with a series of **online conversations with international guests**, who from different positions responded directly to the central issue of the festival and analyzed the multifaceted nature of modern virtual environments, given the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first in the webinar series, in the format of a presentation and a conversation with the artists was with Untold Garden studio (Jakob Skote, Max Čelar) and Sebastian Dahlqvist. The second, on the topic of digital intimacy, was moderated by **Ghislaine Boddington (UK)**, co-founder and creative director of body> data>space in London, who spoke to guests including **Sly Lee**, co-founder, and CEO of Emerge, **Judd Morrissey**, **Mark Joseph Jeffery**, and **Abraham Avnisan**, artists and professors at the School of Art Institute of Chicago and Kent State University, and **Valerie Wolf Gang**, an intermedia artist, videographer, and educator. The purpose of the discussion was to examine the potentials of virtual-physical hybrid environments of the future with the priority to reflect on digital intimacy, socio-social affiliation, and interconnection.

Žiga Pavlovič (SI), creative manager of KIBLA'S new laboratory for extended reality (XR) technologies KIBLA2LAB, with guests **Marko Cafnik (MULTIVERSUM d.o.o)**, **dr. doc. Jože Guno (Multimedia Laboratory, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana)** and **Erik Kapfer (Pattern City Velenje)** sought answers to the challenges of the XR industry, education and content design for the field of augmented reality (XR) technologies.

The accompanying program consisted of **a series of webinars and reading circles** (moderated by **Irena Borić**) with guests. Ursula le Guin and Donna Haraway's selected texts were discussed with the artist **Saša Spačal (SI)**, emphasizing the importance of storytelling and collective thinking concerning nature and technology. The discussion with **Selma Selman (BA / US)** was based on the literary work Virginia Wolf's *Own Room* and the video documentation of the performance *A Pink Room of Her Own*, both of which problematize the circumstances of women's work. The webinar with **Dina Karadžić (HR)** was based on a text by theorist Hito Steyerl *Is the Internet Dead?*. The last seminar in December with **Maja Hodošček (SI)** was based on the text of the philosopher and theorist Byung Chul-Han, *The Crisis of Freedom*, published in the book *Psychopolitics. Neoliberalism and new technologies of power*. We talked about the notion of labour on an emotional level and constant productivity as an integral aspect of today's work.

January - March 2021

In 2021 the festival begins with **a series of webinars**, which will take place via the ZOOM application and are led by critic **Irena Borić**. **Every Tuesday at 6 p.m.**, we will be joined by artists who, through their artistic practice and selected theoretical texts, will question the virtual worlds today. On Tuesday, 19 January, the first webinar of this year will take place, entitled *Digital Media Environment*, with a guest, intermedia artist **Sara Bezovšek (SI)**, on 26 January, we will continue with the *Snow Crash* seminar, which will be hosted by artist and animator **Tea Stražičić (HR)**; on 2 February, the *Art, Technology and Humanism* seminar guest will be the curator and project manager of the Zagreb Center for Intermedia Art KONTEJNER **Tereza Teklić (HR)**; on 9

February, the *Reality Business* seminar will take place with **BirdA/Tom Kerševan, Sendi Mango, Jurij Pavlica (SI) collective as our guests.**

We are also continuing with thematically focused panel discussions at the end of January, which will take place live - between January and March; live streams, will be broadcast on Thursdays at **6 p. m.** Panels with international artists, theorists, scientists, professors, and other cultural workers will be moderated by **Ida Hiršenfelder (SI)**, sound artist and archivist, **Regine Debatty (BE)**, blogger and critic, founder of platform We Make Money Not Art, **dr. Kaja Antlejš (SI / AU)**, heritologist and industrial designer, professor at Deakin University in Geelong, Australia, and intermedia artist and producer **Peter Tomaž Dobrila (SI)**. With guests, we will 'walk' through virtual spaces, observe artistic approaches and strategies, cultural heritage, and natural heritage, dystopian/utopian futuristic speculative realities will be combined using XR technologies, which they create in response to the current crisis and critically reflected by artists in collaboration with scientists. We will discuss ways of presenting and producing works of art (XR technology) in virtual worlds, and the impact of the pandemic on international festivals of contemporary interdisciplinary art, and the challenges and potentials faced by various actors in these fields today.

In the RUK network's show room on the web platform www.kiblix.org, we will also present **pilot projects** that the network partners are implementing in cooperation with other project stakeholders (companies, associations, educational institutions) on the axis Trbovlje - Maribor - Koper. **DDTlab (Delavski dom Trbovlje)** is developing a pilot project, **Plastic recycling with a 3D printer based on blockchain technology** in cooperation with **GNS Plus d.o.o.** from Trbovlje. The second project that is currently being developed in collaboration with **dr. Uroš Ocepek** and the airline **AFormX is a flight simulator NeuroFly**. This project aims to combine a VR flight simulator with a brain-computer interface, enabling direct communication between the user's brain and the simulator and moving the aircraft in the simulation.

Two projects produced by **PiNALAB (PiNA Koper)** will also be presented, namely ***SIMBIOCEN - Laboratory for Invasive Plant Processing and Practice of Non-Invasive Exchanges***, carried out by the **Trajna Association** in Ljubljana (in cooperation with the ProstoRož Association and the Permaculture Association of Slovenia), and an intermedia art installation at the Besenghi Degli Ughi Palace in Izola ***Dante Copiosus*** in co-production with the **Stran22 collective**.

Slovenia Global Game Jam **starts on 27 January**, and will be carried out in cooperation with the **Slovenian Game Developers Association**. Slovenia Global Game Jam is an organized, creative gathering for individuals in Slovenia who want to learn, experiment, and co-create in the medium of video games. This time it will take place online for the first time. Before the start, a series of lectures will be organized to help new participants enter teamwork more easily.

AV events will also round off the program. More at www.kiblix.org.

KIBLIX 2020—2021 is part of the project RUK (2019—2022). RUK is a network of art and culture research centers on the crossroads of art, science, and technology. In this interdisciplinary triangle, the partners Delavski dom Trbovlje, PiNA and KIBLA on the Trbovlje-Koper-Maribor axis are developing innovative products and services for a humane technology of the future. The project is co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Union under the European Regional Development Fund.

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Visual material

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