

Les Portes du Possible / A gateway to possible worlds

Nov 5, 2022 — Apr 17, 2023 | Centre Pompidou-Metz, Metz, France

"Science fiction is the art of the possible," said Ray Bradbury. Operating under the guise of anticipation, it speaks to us about the present, serving as a laboratory of hypotheses that manipulate and extrapolate the repressive norms and dogmas of the current world, encompassing its ambitions, social struggles, opportunities, and dangers.

Over the past few decades, a "liquid" form of the present has emerged, disintegrating our certainties and habits, accelerating the pace of discoveries and rendering them obsolete. In this volatile context, numerous artists find inspiration in the realm of science fiction to undertake critical reflections. Unlike other genres, it has the ability to more subtly and profoundly question the potential of humanity by transcending the boundaries between science, ethics, and politics, allowing for an "external" perspective on humanity and its inventions.

By exploring the potentials of the present, by constructing narratives based on scientific hypotheses or envisioning unprecedented ways of life and realities, science fiction emerges as a genre that confronts humanity with radical otherness. It offers liberation from dominant political discourses, embodies difference, political utopia, and a profound renewal of our perceptions. Consequently, it has always served as a fertile ground for protest movements.

Speculative fiction unsettles us, propels us forward by evoking fear, and challenges the ramparts of our habits and conscience. Despite operating from the fringes, the themes it addresses lie at the core of contemporary societal issues that affect us all: social fragmentation, rampant capitalism, new forms of panopticism and totalitarianism, alienation, trans-/post-humanism, the dissolution of gender boundaries, colonialism, and, of course, ecological disasters and human obsolescence. However, since the historic Science-fiction exhibition organized by Harald Szeemann in 1967/68 at the Kunsthalle in Bern, the Museum of Decorative Arts in Paris, and the Kunsthalle in Düsseldorf, when SF was at its peak, few large-scale projects have been dedicated to its fruitful union with art.

Bringing together approximately 180 works spanning from the late 1960s to the present, the exhibition "Les Portes du possible: Art & Science Fiction" will explore over 2,300 square meters the intersections between imagined universes and reality, involving visual artists, writers, architects, and filmmakers. Operating in a self-fulfilling prophecy manner, science fiction continues to shape our visions of the future and actively participates in its construction. By altering our imagination and semantics, it also has the power to influence the trajectory of societies. The exhibition, rather than focusing solely on the dominant dystopian prism, will strive to revitalize and intentionally reclaim the future.