

2024

CONTEMPORARY



WORLD

OBSERVATORY

A comprehensive market analysis to intercept future trends
through contemporary artistic scenarios.

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AXA

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	2
Methodology	3
Data Analysis	7
Megatrend	8
Distribution	9
Nature Securitization	11
Machine vs. Us	24
Human Future	37

Executive Summary

How to intercept trends in the age of complexity?

An analysis of the contemporary artistic scenario to intercept future trends.

Overview

In this era of profound uncertainty, society is called upon to adapt to a constantly evolving scenario, characterized by complexity and interdisciplinarity.

Each of us has decision-making power capable of influencing our own future, but to envision the future and identify its trends, it's necessary to relay upon the visionary of our epoch.

Contemporary artists are vision driven, being constantly generative; their imagery is able to anticipate the future with great transformative power.

Acquiring this vision allows us to glimpse the minds of individuals who can anticipate potential futures, equipping us to adapt flexibly to unforeseen circumstances.

Art is a powerful metaphor for the development of innovative thinking and an international language that talk universally talk about the future challenges of humanity.

Scope

The purpose of this analysis is to intercept future trends by examining the fundamental and often unconscious role and influence that contemporary art has in the current social, cultural, and economic context. The research focuses on bringing to light the most pressing issues of our time through an analysis of artistic artwork and understanding how contemporary artists interpret and anticipate the future through their works.



Methodology

This section outlines the methods for data collection, sample selection and data analysis that will be used in this research.

Firstly, it is necessary to identify the main players that compose the contemporary art system: artists, collectors, museums, galleries, art fairs, and auction houses.

Data collection methods

The research will sample a broad spectrum of international contemporary art events. It will analyze the most influential contemporary art magazines, the most visited exhibitions of the past five years, the curatorial choices of Biennials worldwide, the programming of the most reputable

international museums, and the contemporary art fairs where artists and their works intersect with the market and collecting. The collected data will be cross-referenced to identify recurring themes and emerging trends.

Final considerations will be made after an even deeper synthesis of the data identifying 10 "events" that are both iconic and visionary representing current trends in contemporary art thus suggesting future directions"

#	Dataset
50+	Contemporary Art Magazines
30+	Contemporary Art Museums
100+	Contemporary Art Exhibition
50+	Contemporary Art Biennials
20+	Contemporary Art Fairs

Criteria

Quantitatives

✦ **Artist of global reach**

The research will consider emerging artists and prominent living masters to ensure both contemporary relevance and a forward-looking perspective on societal transformation.

✦ **Exhibitions realised with artworks no older than five years**

To accurately research potential future trends, it is essential to focus on exhibitions and artworks from the past five years of the global art scene.

Qualitatives

✦ **Simplicity and visual immediacy**

To effectively convey the visionary message of the artwork, it is crucial to ensure visual immediacy. The artwork should be easily comprehensible to a broad audience, including those outside the art world, to make a lasting impression on human memory.

✦ **Visual power of the artwork**

The visual power of contemporary art lies in its ability to evoke strong emotional responses and provoke thought through innovative and dynamic expressions.

Research Process

- 1.**
Dataset creation and analysis
- 2.**
**Identification of most significant
Global Art Exhibitions and Art
Projects**
- 3.**
**Correlation between Art
Projects and weak signals**
- 4.**
**Identification of most
relevant megatrend**
- 5.**
**Shortlist of Selected
Anticipatory Artwork**
- 6.**
Report

Data analysis

Analysis process

The research was conducted through a multi-phase analytical process: initially, international art magazines, as well as the most prominent biennials, triennials, and quadrennials worldwide, were consulted. Subsequently, 75 of the most relevant artworks and exhibitions were selected from the database for study and clustering to identify trends and megatrends.

250

Magazine, Biennals,
Triennals, Quadriennals

80

Artworks

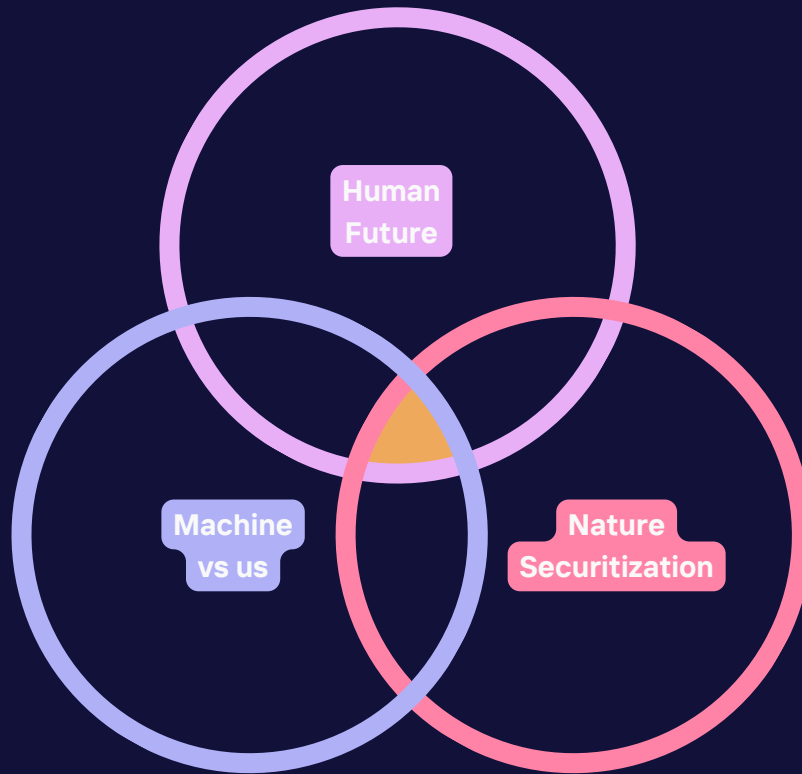
3

Megatrend

9

Anticipatory
Artwork

Megatrend



The analysis revealed three megatrends, each with its own specificities, yet deeply **interconnected**. This highlights a significant aspect of our times: the impossibility of addressing any single issue in isolation.

Megatrend

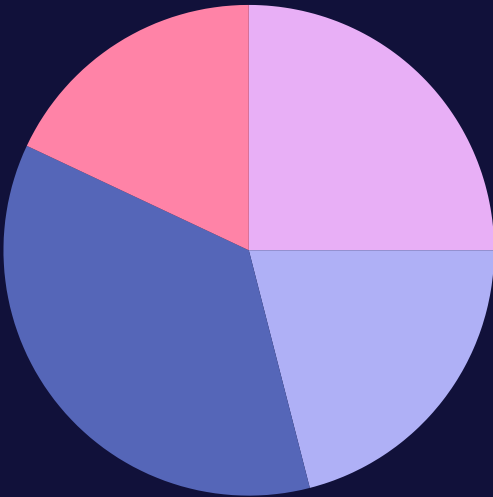
Focus

After a thorough analysis, it has emerged that the main future trends guiding contemporary artists' research are as follows:

#	MegaTrend	Description	Percentage
1.	Nature Securitization	Guardians of the new Eden, crafting a resilient planet's future through imagination	18%
2.	Machine vs. Us	The dawn of the hybrid era, where humankind and machines merge into a new reality	21%
3.	Human Future	Exploring the evolving human landscape to design a society for a dynamic future world	25%
4.	Others		36%
	Identity		11%
	Social Changes		8%
	Capitalism		6%
	Spiritualism		6%

Trend distribution

The pie chart illustrates the proportion of exhibitions that are part of a specific trend. It shows the distribution of various exhibitions categorized under the trend, highlighting which categories are most prevalent.

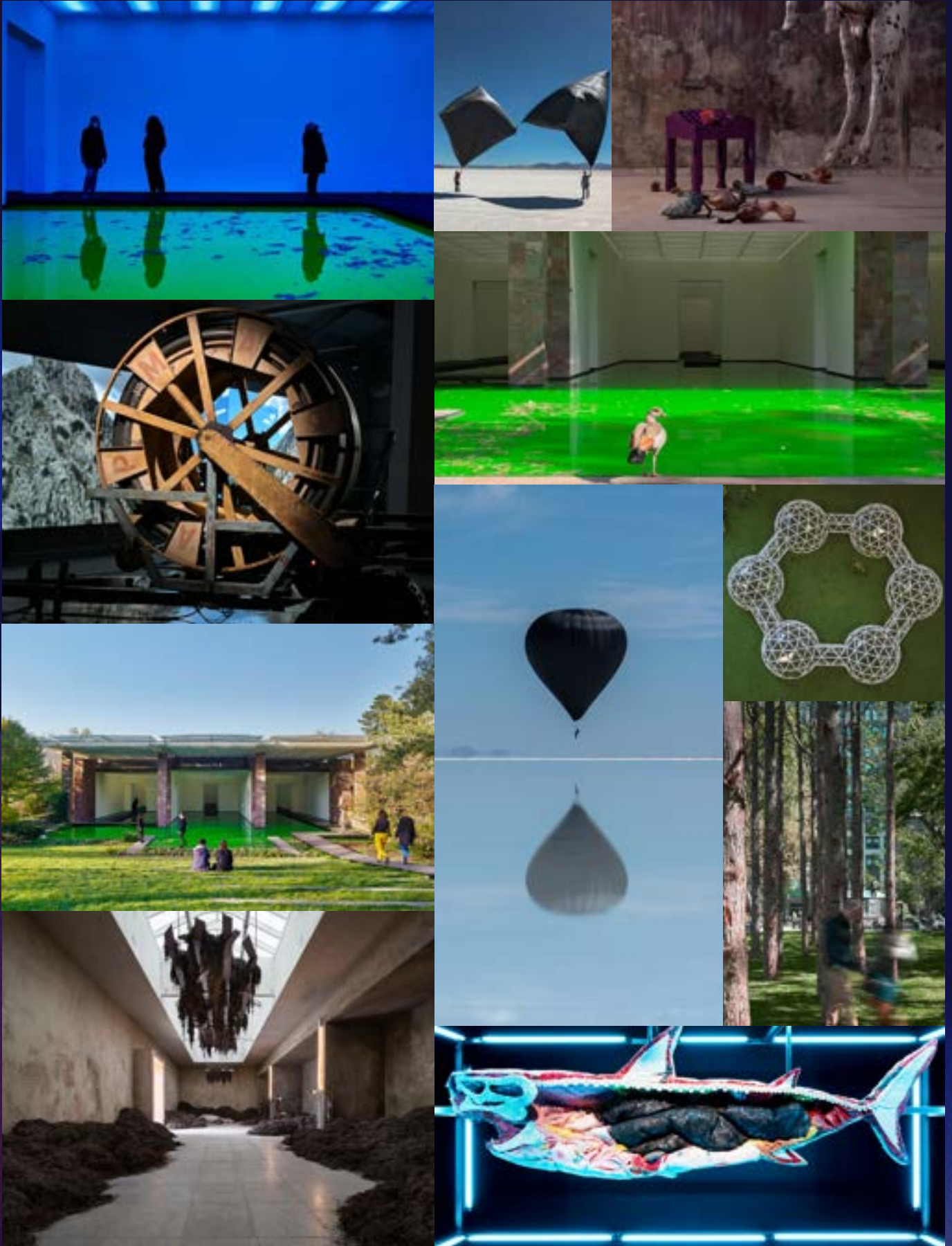


Nature Securitization

Megatrend 1.0

Guardians of the new Eden, crafting a resilient planet's future through imagination

1. Nature Securitization



1. Nature Securitization

This megatrend focuses on the growing challenges of environmental issues, including the management of natural resources, climate impacts, and sustainable energy. As threats like extreme weather and biodiversity loss intensify, protecting ecosystems has become a key security priority for communities. The insight also highlights a renewed interest in the concept of biomimicry: the ability to learn from nature's survival strategies that offer valuable insights for sustainable solutions, illustrating that even the smallest life forms, like bacteria and fungi can be seen as models for resilience and adaptability.

Anticipating Artwork I



Cities in the Sky: Future Horizons

AEROCENE – Tomas Saraceno

Hot-air balloon

CCK – Centro Cultural Kirchner, Buenos Aires, 2020

Anticipating Artwork II



Urban Spaces Reclaimed by Nature

LIFE – Olafur Eliasson

Exhibition

Fondation Beyeler, 2021

Anticipating Artwork III



Urbanization's Shadow on Nature's Future

Ghost Forest – Maya Lin

49 haunting Atlantic white cedar trees

Madison Square Park, New York, 2021

1. Nature Securitization

Cloud Topic

Urbanisation

Future Cities

Sustainability

Environmental surveillance

Earth Destruction

Endangered biosphere

Resilient communities

Closed ecosystems

Reforestation

Mass extinction

Desertification

Natural Resources

Climate Change

Anticipating Artwork I
AEROCENE, Tomás Saraceno



AEROCENE

Tomás Saraceno
CCK - Centro Cultural
Kirchner, Buenos Aires, 2020

AEROCENE, presents large, floating structures designed to hover in the air. These structures are part of an experimental project exploring airborne technologies, with the floating elements representing potential future solutions for environmental challenges.

AEROCENE, Tomás Saraceno



AEROCENE, Tomás Saraceno

Current Analysis

AEROCENE by Tomas Saraceno is an innovative project that envisions a future where human activities are harmonized with the environment. Saraceno's work features large, balloon-like structures that float using solar energy, symbolizing a new relationship with our environment and suggesting a future free from fossil fuels and traditional energy sources

Business Relevance

This artwork highlights the importance of transitioning towards sustainable energy sources and minimizing environmental impact. Businesses are increasingly recognizing the need to innovate in clean energy and sustainable practices. The integration of renewable technologies into business operations is becoming crucial for long-term viability and environmental responsibility.

Futuristic Perspective

Future trends may include the widespread adoption of sustainable technologies and energy sources that harmonize with natural systems. Innovations could involve advanced solar and wind technologies, zero-emission transportation, and new methods for reducing our carbon footprint.

Potential Trends

- Sustainable and Adaptive Transportation Technologies: Aerocene showcases aerial transport powered by solar energy and air, predicting a shift towards eco-friendly transport systems that use renewable energy and adapt to climate changes.
- Interdisciplinary Collaboration and Symbiosis: By blending art, science, and sustainability, Aerocene highlights the growing trend of interdisciplinary approaches in solving global challenges, fostering innovative solutions through collaboration.

Anticipating Artwork II
LIFE, Olafur Eliasson



LIFE

Olafur Eliasson
Fondation Beyeler, 2021

In Olafur Eliasson's *LIFE* at Fondation Beyeler, visitors navigate dark wooden walkways amidst ambient sounds and scents from plants and water, while viewing a public garden. Eliasson removed many windows to merge the museum with its surroundings, including nature and changing weather, blurring the lines between indoors and outdoors, and between museum and artwork. This installation reflects Eliasson's vision of a space open day and night, where visitors and the environment coexist directly.

***LIFE**, Olafur Eliasson*



LIFE, Olafur Eliasson

Current Analysis

Olafur Eliasson's *Life* presents an immersive installation that reflects on the interconnectedness of all living things. The work involves natural elements and dynamic lighting to create a sensory experience that underscores the delicate balance of ecosystems and the impact of human activities on nature.

Futuristic Perspective

The future may see greater integration of natural elements into business operations and urban design. We could witness the development of living buildings, biophilic design principles, and urban green spaces that enhance human well-being and environmental health.

Business Relevance

Eliasson's work emphasizes the importance of understanding and preserving the delicate balance of ecosystems. Businesses are increasingly focused on incorporating sustainability into their practices, not only to mitigate their environmental impact but also to foster a deeper connection with natural systems.

Potential Trends

- **Sustainable and Adaptive Urban Design:** a trend towards urban environments and buildings that better adapt to natural conditions, incorporating green spaces and responding to weather changes. Incorporation of natural elements into architectural and urban planning to improve well-being and sustainability.
- **Sensory Experiences and Well-Being:** a growing focus on creating environments that engage all senses to enhance well-being. This could lead to innovations in public and private spaces that promote physical and mental health through sensory design.

Anticipating Artwork II
Ghost Forest, Maya Lin



Ghost Forest

Maya Lin
Madison Square Park,
New York, 2021

Ghost Forest consists of a collection of dead trees arranged in a dramatic formation. The installation displays these lifeless trees in an artistic manner, reflecting the impact of deforestation and environmental change.

Ghost Forest, Maya Lin



Ghost Forest, Maya Lin

Current Analysis

Maya Lin's *Ghost Forest* features a poignant installation of dead trees, symbolizing the loss of natural landscapes due to environmental degradation. The work serves as a powerful reminder of the impact of human activity on forests and ecosystems.

Futuristic Perspective

Future trends might involve the creation of advanced conservation technologies and strategies to restore and preserve natural habitats. Innovations could include reforestation projects, habitat preservation technologies, and new approaches to balancing development with environmental stewardship.

Business Relevance

This artwork underscores the urgent need for businesses to address deforestation and habitat destruction. Sustainable practices and corporate responsibility are increasingly crucial as companies work to mitigate their environmental impact and support conservation efforts.

Potential Trends

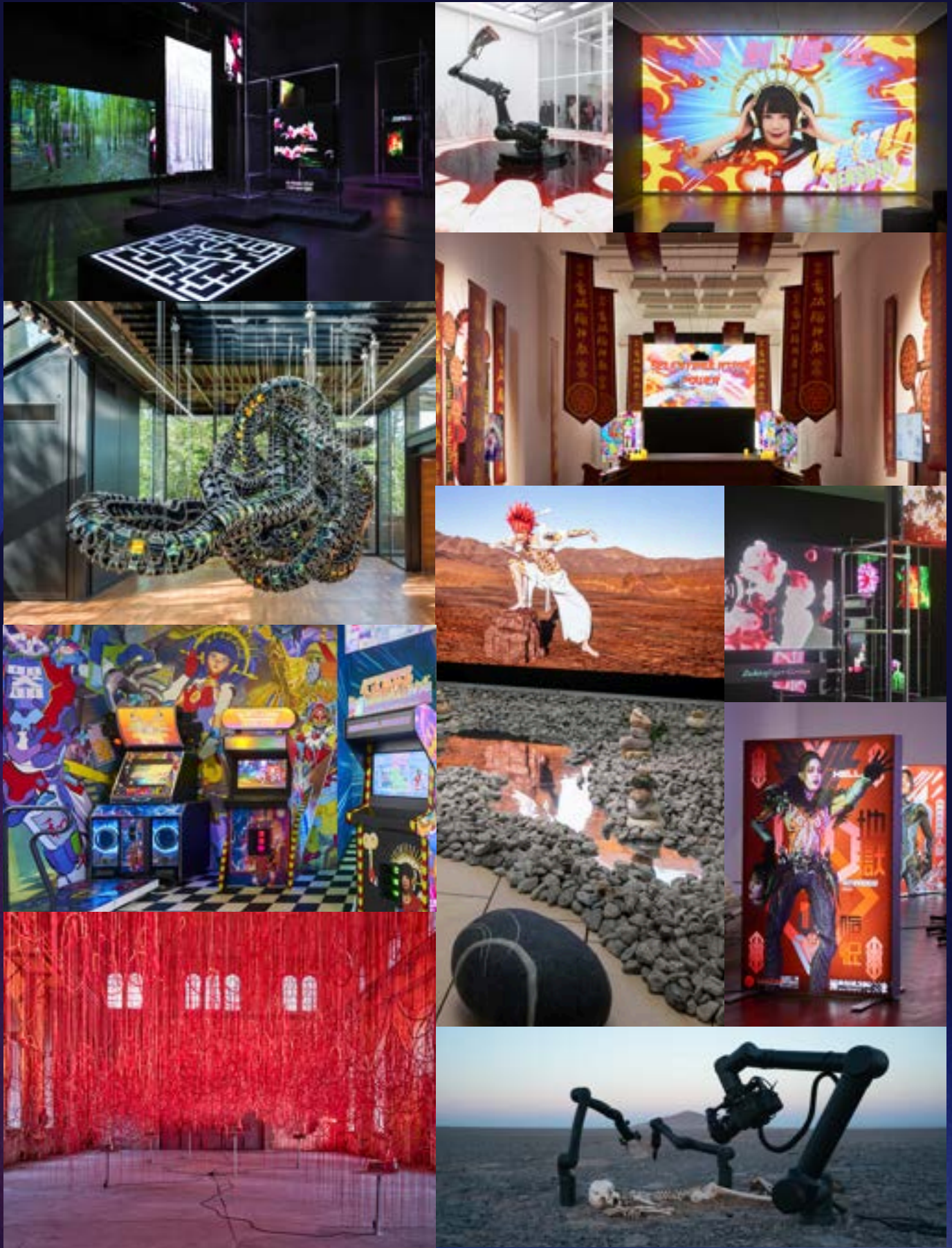
- **Conservation Technologies:** Advanced methods for protecting and restoring natural habitats and biodiversity.
- **Sustainable Development:** Approaches that balance economic growth with environmental protection, including responsible land use and resource management.

Machine vs. Us

Megatrend 2.0

The dawn of the hybrid era, where humankind and machines merge into a new reality

2. Machine vs. Us



2. Machine vs. Us

This megatrend reflects the profound integration of humans and machines, where technological advancements are reshaping our interactions with digital and physical environments. As artificial intelligence, real-time data processing, and digital bodies become more prevalent, new forms of interaction and symbiosis between humans and technology emerge. This convergence is transforming how we perceive identity, experience reality, and manage our daily lives, leading to a hybrid existence where the boundaries between the organic and the digital blur.

Anticipating Artwork I



Anticipating Artwork II



Anticipating Artwork III



Navigating the Threshold of New Realities

Camata, Pierre Huyghe – Liminal
Video Installation
Punta della Dogana, Venice, 2024

Awakening the Digital Soul

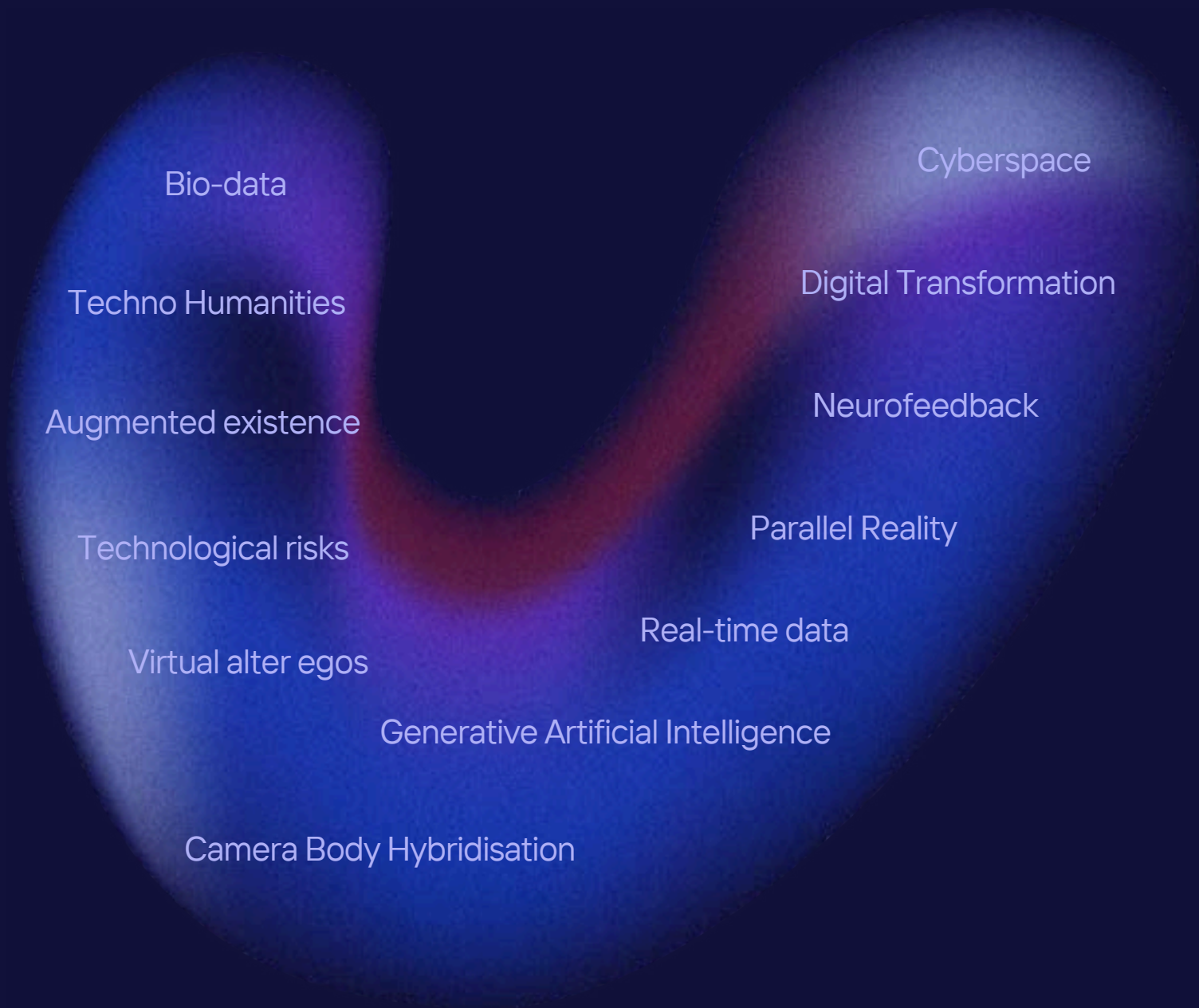
DOKU, the Flow – Lu Yang
Film
Fondation Louis Vuitton, 2024

The Machine's Endless Struggle

Can't Help Myself – Sun Yuan e Peng Yu
Kuka industrial robot, dimensions variable
Venice Biennale, 2019

2. Machine vs. Us

Cloud Topic



Anticipating Artwork I
Camata, Pierre Huyghe



Camata

Pierre Huyghe

Liminal, Punta della Dogana,
Venice, 2024

**Camata* by Pierre Huyghe is an AI-driven film set around a miner's skeleton in the Atacama Desert. Robotic arms perform ritualistic gestures, while cameras capture the scene, all controlled by AI. The film is continuously re-edited based on sensor data, creating an ever-evolving, autonomous burial ritual.*

Camata, Pierre Huyghe



Camata, Pierre Huyghe

Current Analysis

Camata by Pierre Huyghe explores the intersection of human ritual and technology, using AI to autonomously direct a continuous burial process centered on a miner's skeleton in the Atacama Desert. By removing human intervention, the work raises questions about technology's role in reshaping our understanding of death, time, and memory. The viewer is immersed in a constantly shifting narrative, challenging traditional notions of spectatorship and inviting reflection on the future relationship between humans, technology, and nature.

Business Relevance

Camata by Pierre Huyghe suggests key business implications, particularly around AI and automation. It highlights the potential for AI to drive autonomous decision-making and create adaptive, personalized customer experiences. The work also raises ethical questions about AI's impact on society, urging businesses to consider its broader implications. Finally, it points to the importance of balancing human and machine collaboration in the workplace.

Futuristic Perspective

As technology continues to advance, we might witness the development of environments where artificial intelligence and augmented reality create entirely new sensory experiences. Camata anticipates a future where immersive spaces are not only physical but also virtual, blending digital and physical realities seamlessly. This could lead to the emergence of fully interactive environments where AI adapts in real-time to human emotions and interactions, creating a highly personalized and dynamic experience.

Potential Trends

- **Hyper-Personalized Environments:** Future environments could be tailored to individual preferences and emotional states, powered by real-time AI and advanced sensory technologies.
- **Mixed Reality Integration:** The lines between physical and virtual spaces may blur further, with augmented and virtual reality becoming integral to daily life and business environments.

Anticipating Artwork II
Doku, the Flow, Lu Yang



DOKU, the Flow

Lu Yang
Fondation Louis Vuitton,
Paris, 2024

Doku, the Flow combines animated digital imagery with live-action video. The work presents a fantastical world featuring animated characters and landscapes that evolve and interact in real-time, creating a constantly changing visual experience.

Doku, the Flow, Lu Yang



Doku, the Flow, Lu Yang

Current Analysis

Lu Yang's *Doku, the Flow* depicts a futuristic scenario where human and machine identities merge, featuring digital avatars and cybernetic enhancements. The artwork explores themes of transhumanism and the evolving synergy between humans and technology.

Business Relevance

As technology increasingly influences personal and professional identities, businesses must adapt to these changes. Understanding how digital personas and virtual interactions impact consumer behavior can help organizations develop innovative strategies and solutions that align with emerging needs and identities.

Futuristic Perspective

Looking ahead, we might experience a more profound integration of human and digital identities. This could include advanced bioengineering and neural interfaces that enhance or even fundamentally alter human capabilities. The future may bring about the development of virtual identities that are as central to personal and professional life as physical identities, with digital avatars becoming integral to how we interact, work, and socialize.

Potential Trends

- **Neural Integration:** Advances in neurotechnology could enable direct communication between the human brain and digital systems, enhancing cognitive and sensory experiences.
- **Virtual Identity Networks:** The rise of complex digital personas and networks that operate parallel to physical identities, influencing both personal and professional interactions.

Anticipating Artwork III

Can't Help Myself, Sun Yuan e Peng Yu



Can't Help Myself

Sun Yuan e Peng Yu
Venice Biennale, 2019

Can't Help Myself shows an autonomous robot enclosed in a transparent box intent on a repetitive ritual task. Inside, the robot uses its mechanical arms to handle a pool of red liquid that keeps spilling out. The robot continuously tries to contain the liquid, but is unable to stop it from spilling out.

Can't Help Myself, Sun Yuan e Peng Yu



***Can't Help Myself*, Sun Yuan e Peng Yu**

Current Analysis

In *Can't Help Myself*, Sun Yuan and Peng Yu present a robotic arm engaged in an endless and seemingly futile task of cleaning a puddle of red liquid. This artwork highlights the complex role of automation and robotics, revealing both their indispensable nature and inherent limitations.

Business Relevance

This artwork emphasizes the need for a balanced approach to automation. While technology can significantly streamline processes and improve accuracy, there is still a crucial need for human judgment and oversight. Businesses should ensure that technological advancements complement rather than replace the human elements essential to their operations.

Futuristic Perspective

This artwork presages a future where automation and robotics become even more sophisticated, but also more self-aware and autonomous. Future developments may lead to robots with advanced problem-solving capabilities and emotional intelligence, able to adapt their behavior based on complex contextual cues. We could see the rise of self-optimizing systems that continuously improve their own performance, potentially leading to new forms of collaborative human-machine partnerships.

Potential Trends

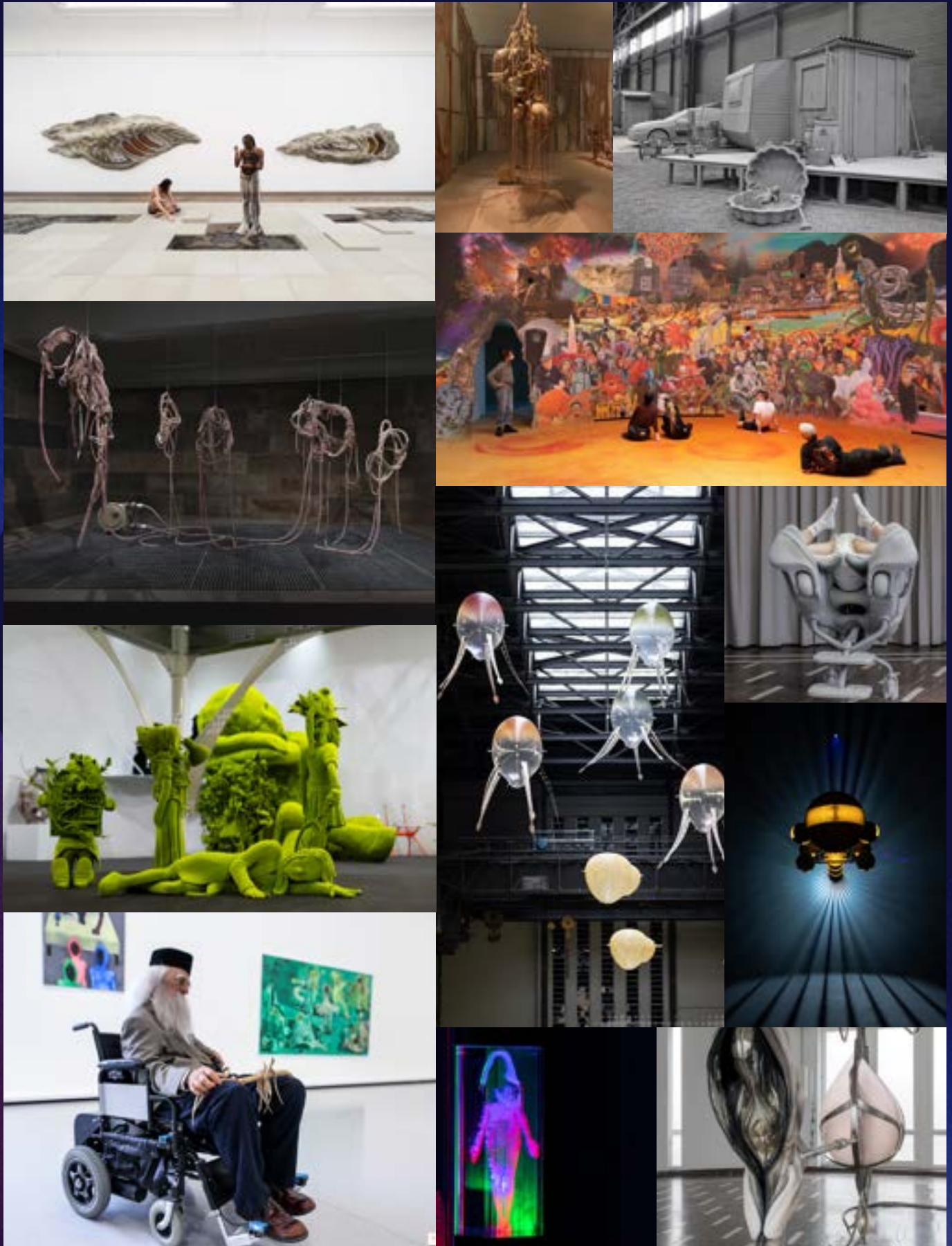
- **Self-Learning Automation:** Robots and AI systems that autonomously refine their tasks and processes, minimizing the need for human intervention.
- **Emotional AI:** Machines equipped with emotional intelligence to better understand and respond to human needs and behaviors.

Human Future

Megatrend 3.0

Exploring the evolving human landscape to design a society for a dynamic future world

3. Human Future



3. Human Future

Cloud Topic



3. Human Future

This megatrend focuses on the evolving human experience in the context of future societal and environmental challenges. It encompasses innovations in biotechnologies, shifting demographics, and the quest for longevity, all while grappling with the impacts of global pandemics and emerging diseases.

As we adapt to these changes, there is a growing emphasis on redesigning our living environments and social structures to accommodate a future that is both technologically advanced and resilient, preparing us for a fundamentally altered human condition.

Anticipating Artwork I



Anticipating Artwork II



Anticipating Artwork III



Echoes of Tomorrow's Solitude

Hans Op de Beeck - We were the last to stay
Immersive Installation, 2022. 7900 × 2400 × 1360 cm. Mixed media, Lyon Biennale, France, 2022

Robots in the Realm of the Elderly

Sun Yuan e Peng Yu - Old People's Home
Life size sculptures and 13 dynamoelectric wheel chairs. Bourse de Commerce, Paris, 2024

The Future of Machine-Nature Harmony

Ivana Bašić - Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics.
Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, 2024

Anticipating Artwork I

We were the last to stay, Hans Op de Beeck



Hans Op de Beeck

We were the last to stay
Immersive Installation, 2022.
7900 × 2400 × 1360 cm.
Mixed media

Lyon Biennale, France, 2022

We Were the Last to Stay presents a detailed, immersive human scale diorama of a desolate and quiet world. The environment features meticulously crafted miniatures of abandoned buildings, empty streets, and serene landscapes. The scene is devoid of human presence, evoking a sense of stillness and isolation. Dim lighting and subtle atmospheric sounds add to the eerie, melancholic mood of a space left behind, creating a contemplative atmosphere of solitude.

We were the last to stay, Hans Op de Beeck



We were the last to stay, Hans Op de Beeck

Current Analysis

We Were the Last to Stay by Hans Op de Beeck depicts a somber, almost dystopian vision of the future, reflecting on themes of decay and abandonment. The artwork presents a narrative where human presence is minimal, and the remnants of civilization suggest a post-apocalyptic scenario.

Futuristic Perspective

Future trends might involve the development of technologies and strategies focused on environmental restoration and resilience. Businesses may invest more in circular economies, climate adaptation technologies, and innovations aimed at reversing environmental damage.

Business Relevance

This piece highlights the importance of sustainability and long-term thinking. Businesses are increasingly recognizing the need to address environmental and societal impacts to avoid future scenarios of decline. Embracing sustainability not only aligns with ethical considerations but also caters to a growing consumer demand for responsible practices.

Potential Trends

- **Circular Economies:** Systems designed to minimize waste and make full use of resources, fostering sustainability.
- **Climate Adaptation Technologies:** Innovations aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate change impacts.

Anticipating Artwork II

Old People's Home, Sun Yuan e Peng Yu



Sun Yuan e Peng Yu

Old People's Home

*13 life size sculptures and 13
dynamoelectric wheel chairs
Variable dimensions*

*Le monde comme il va,
Bourse de Commerce -
Pinault Collection, Paris, 2024*

Old People's Home features elderly individuals interacting with a robotic system designed to engage them. The robot performs various tasks and activities to assist and entertain the elderly, focusing on their interaction with the robotic technology.

Old People's Home, Sun Yuan e Peng Yu



Old People's Home, Sun Yuan e Peng Yu

Current Analysis

Old People's Home by Sun Yuan & Peng Yu features a poignant depiction of the elderly and explores themes of aging and societal neglect. The artwork comments on how societies may fail to adequately care for their aging populations.

Business Relevance

This artwork underscores the growing need for businesses to address aging populations and the associated challenges. There is an increasing demand for solutions that improve quality of life for the elderly, including healthcare innovations, elder care services, and age-friendly technologies.

Futuristic Perspective

The future may see the rise of advanced elder care technologies and services that integrate AI, robotics, and personalized healthcare. Businesses could focus on creating environments and products that cater specifically to the needs of an aging population, enhancing both physical and emotional well-being.

Potential Trends

- **Advanced Elder Care:** Technologies and services designed to improve the quality of life and care for the elderly.
- **Age-Friendly Innovations:** Products and environments tailored to meet the needs of aging individuals, from smart homes to health monitoring systems.

Anticipating Artwork III

Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics, Ivana Bašić



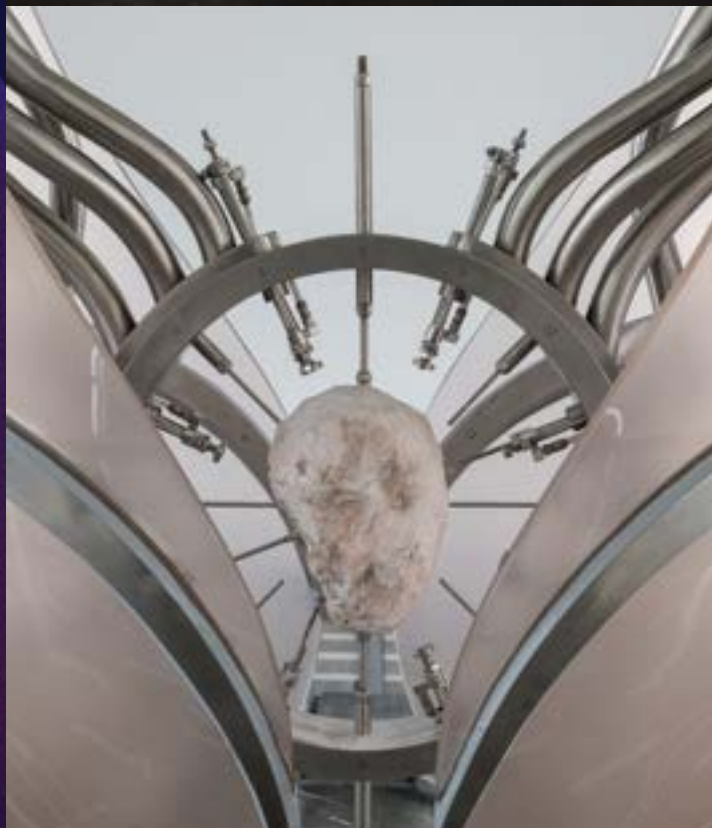
Ivana Bašić

Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics

Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin, 2024

Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics consists of sculptures made from silicone, metal, and pneumatic systems. The pneumatic components cause the sculptures to move and shift, mimicking organic motion. Air pressure moves through internal tubing, giving the sculptures a lifelike, unsettling quality as they expand, contract, and subtly shift.

Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics, Ivana Bašić



Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics, Ivana Bašić

Current Analysis

Ivana Bašić's *Metempsychosis: The Passion of Pneumatics* explores the transformation and cyclical nature of existence through mechanical and pneumatic systems. The artwork delves into themes of life, death, and rebirth, reflecting on the mechanistic and spiritual aspects of human experience.

Business Relevance

This piece suggests a future where technological advancements are deeply intertwined with philosophical and existential considerations. Businesses may need to address how technological transformations affect human experiences and values, integrating ethical considerations into their innovation strategies.

Futuristic Perspective

Future trends might involve the development of technologies that enhance human experiences and explore existential themes. Innovations could include advanced bioengineering, AI with deep emotional and ethical capabilities, and technologies that bridge the gap between human consciousness and mechanistic systems.

Potential Trends

- **Bioengineering Innovations:** Advances in genetic and biological technologies aimed at enhancing human capabilities and addressing existential questions.
- **Ethical AI:** Development of artificial intelligence systems that incorporate deep ethical and emotional understanding to better align with human values.

Thank you!



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