A Space Mission: Artists reflecting on gravity by its absence.
Zero Gravity:
A silent question

When we are born we pass in an instant from the dark to the light, from weightlessness to heaviness; here is our first contact with life. In dreams we remember this primitive state of lightness and so we dream of flying. Our planet and its life are moulded by gravity and yet this force is the weakest in the universe. We find its mysterious presence in our bodies, in our language and we fight against it to grow and to reach the stars.

The Matters of Gravity highlights the fundamental principles of humankind. With a lightness to be able to fly together, but with a gravity that inevitably makes us fall again. Every one of us, here on Earth, is attached to a force that goes beyond all comprehension but not beyond our lives.

Two years of reflexion and a few seconds in zero gravity, were the origins of a series of artists’ work that has been completed at the Yuri Gagaran Cosmonaut Training Centre in Russia. There, on board the iconic Ilyushin 76 MDK, 9 artists and 1 scientist from Mexico were subject to an environment of weightlessness.

A few seconds were enough to experiment with eternity, to realise a story, to break a paradigm, to liberate a molecule, to have an illusion, to experience movement without references, to create poetry out of two bodies, to make the useless become useful and to search for an impossible embrace.

Director: Nahum.
Artistic director: Ale de la Puente
Ale de la Puente

“Gravity is just a condition of the Earth, the Sun’s will, cause of time...and an affectation of life.”

Ale de la Puente explores notions of time by experiences given by space, from a technological, scientific, philosophical and even linguistic approach. In her work the relationship between space-time and our image of the world is explored deeply in different mediums. She collaborates in projects that involve astronomy, nuclear sciences, navigation and the different forms in which we perceive time. Our image of the world and the way in which we live it depends on our perception of time.

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Project: An Infinity without destiny

The speed in which we perceive time in everyday life depends on the gravity of our circumstances. In an environment of zero gravity, disorientation is spatial and temporal. Time passes by unnoticed, creating the illusion of a brief eternity. If we perceive time as an entity able to exercise its will, even able to define the randomness of events and what will come about, then the force of gravity is its accomplice in how we perceive the passage of time. In gravity’s absence, time binds itself up.
Arcangel Constantini

“Gravity permeates the hólos, as a process of coherence over perception of the surroundings”

Arcángel Constantini is an artistic inventor, technological hacker; he’s been interested in the research of the water molecule and energy since the last decade, building machines and artifacts to make experiments through different processes. His discourses are nourished by activities related to net-art, technological hacking, the design of interfaces and devices, interactive animation, experimental music and sound art.

Project: Espherica

Analysis of water’s behaviour in free fall, to observe the formation of liquid spheres and to analysis its structure under the influence of oscillatory electro-magnetic fields based on the Schuman resonance and its harmonics. This project asks aesthetical, hypothetical, conceptual and theoretical questions about the water molecule, how forces of nature, such as gravity affect its behaviour and in consequence our relationship with water, from our surroundings to the interior of our own body.
Fabiola Torres-Alzaga

“A crossing of different realities without this being a truth to create a possible and inhabitable space”

Fabiola Torres-Alzaga takes cinema and performance magic as a grounding for her work to explore the way in which we perceive and how this affects the way in which we relate ourselves to the “real”. From simple optical games, her works changes according to the point of view of the spectator, allowing us to see the mechanism of the illusion towards a staging of the possible. Through the means of photography, video, installation and sculpture, she makes an analysis of the mental and physical constructions of illusory worlds locating the spectator on a thin line between reality and speculation.

Project: Staging the Scene

An attempt to inhabit gravity backwards. Space without gravity was different, far from finding itself walking on an inverse space, it was found as an end to itself. A time that was extended and a space without orientation. The innumerable views of the same point. That’s how a project starts to deal with the idea of the open work. To search for a way of representing a weightless experience on the earth approaching what gravity makes impossible of recreating or visualising. Are simulations a way of understanding what is real? An exercise of representing the memory of a weightless experience in its theatrical and cinematographic translation. The ways that we have of simulating to get closer to ways of reality far from the everyday.
Gilberto Esparza

“Gravity formed the universe that we know including the horizon and with this, the point of reference from which our world view begins.”

Gilberto Esparaza encompasses the use of electronic means and robotics to question technology’s impact on everyday life. His work springs from an inquiry over technology’s effects on social relations and the economy, as well as nature’s disorder and urban environment. His recent work is linked with an ongoing investigation about alternative energies. His method employs the recycling of technologies and a dialogue between analogue and digital.

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Project: Errant

From the experience of navigating in a space without references, where the movement of the body and particles in a space without gravity is the origin of an investigation focused on the possibilities of inhabiting a space in zero gravity. Forms of movement that give place to poetic images. To contemplate the behaviour of a body in a simulation of weightless conditions traversing a three dimensional space that traces orbits that are results of a previous analysis of movement conditional to the laws of gravity and other physical aspects in space-time.
Iván Puig

“Gravity: The most tyrannical of the forces.”

Ivan Puig in recent years has linked his artistic interests to political and social problems. In particular to the exploration of the modern project, applied in Latin-American territory and its impact on the construction of imaginaries as well as the critical analysis of the colonialist vision that operates on the planet. A general concern that can be found across his work are the two poles of technology’s social experience: use and waste. His investigations are activated by inquiring; they manifest themselves in diverse techniques with a constant playful sense.

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Project: Paradigmatic Desintegration

In conditions of zero gravity one of the biological paradigms more intimately bound to the definition of our existence and the existence of everything we know of this planet disintegrates. The possibility that a “truth” so absolute, dissolves in front of our eyes, is fascinating. The project makes visible the experience in zero gravity as a reflexion that confronts other systems of beliefs that we assume are immovable.
Juan José Díaz Infante

“To throw yourself into the void means to abandon your body. To throw yourself into the void means to abandon all bodies.”

Juan José Díaz Infante includes experimental poetry, photography, video, installation, multimedia, music, net art and electronic art in his personal work. His work is a poetic exploration of the ludicrous. From within his interest for outer space and its technologies, he uses art as a tool for ideas. This is founded in processes to conceive an idea and then finding the best way of taking it into reality. In this way, he searches to integrate art and civil society, with the space technologies distant from our reach.

Project: Your body, my body

Three dimensional poem designed to activate in zero gravity: Your body, my body. A poem about bodies, all bodies and the forces that interact above and between them. It is a model that reflects on a force. Gravity does not exist without the presence of a body and it requires inevitably the other as the actor of that scene. Your body, my body is the whole text of the poem, everything else is geographies, distances, angles, resonances and movement. The poem is a geography, it is its process, its history.
Marcela Armas

“Gravity is the force that acts over matter and everything else, and as an extension of it, perceives, interprets or expresses time.”

Marcela Armas works in a field where art, science and technology encounter each other. Technology is like a crystallization of imagination and affection and therefore an extension of human nature. Armas, explores the poetic potential of materials and mechanisms as a departure point for reflecting on themes that manifest the conflictive nature of social relations and human procedure from a utilitarian conception of life. She is interested in the observation of processes and material phenomenon, its transformations, overflowing or resounding emanations as thinking manifestations. Her machines and devices construct themselves from an inquiry about the nature of the material from which they are made, machine as a meaning, matter as a carrying vehicle of history.

Project: Geopsy

Is it possible to think of gravity as a determining vector in the writing of history? Considering that gravity participates in the formation of the geological writing of the earth, in every phenomenon that influences the way in which the matter of the universe and its regions are organised. Geology discovers registers of time-space that allows a more amplitude reading of the conditions and the changes of life on the planet. To extract a geological sample - a geopsy - from terrestrial tissue, meaning, from the interior of a system of conditions, implicates incorporating it into a new system of values where gravity operates in a different way. When taking a geospy in conditions of zero gravity, questions are formulated about the relative weight of things and the possibility of thinking and believing that other forms of writing history are conceivable, but especially, of allowing ourselves to face historical events.
Nahum

“Gravity is our introduction to life.”

Nahum is an artist and a musician. His work focuses on themes such as the intimacy of science as well as its links to fantasy and magic. He has worked widely on spatial exploration projects where he promotes cultural and artistic politics within international spatial agendas. Nahum’s spatial work examines the relationship between the universe and the human being and the importance of the personal experience to generate feelings that connect us with the cosmos. His work materializes itself in several bases that include music, performance, drawing and installation.

Project: Holding Onto Air

We are beings that affect and give affection. While the future of our species may be found in distant places with different gravities, how will our emotions interact with our bodies? An impossible embrace that turns into a point of support and that vanishes with air. This piece reflexes on the physical and emotional contact of the human in an environment that is only possible in dreams and in the stars.
Tania Candiani

“Gravity is mysterious and relentless. Gravity is a downward acceleration, towards the centre of the earth. It is the means of existence itself. It bends, rips, holds itself, contains itself ... substance, mass, negative mass, time, eternity.”

Tania Candiani is interested in strategies and practices of translation between systems, linguistic, visual and phonetic, where there is a continuous nostalgia for the obsolete that makes us consider the discursive content of artifacts and future projections derived from the past. Her work methods are based on the formation of interdisciplinary work teams that contribute from their several fields of knowledge and specific skills to achieve poetic intersections between art, design, architecture and science. The links between language, the materiality of sound, the history of science forming a kind of “ars combinatoria “ as an intellectual search.

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Project: Flying Machine. Besnier 1673

The project is based on pioneering anti-gravitational devices. Marvellous inventions that were ahead of their time. Independent from their success or failure they are part of the continuous human research to defeat forces that condition our existence. Artefacts designed to make possible the dream of flying challenging gravity and the human body itself. The project consists of reconstructing artefacts which failed their original objectives and in an environment of micro-gravity granting them the possibility to be successful. Perhaps at the time of their conception, they were simply in the wrong gravity.
Miguel Alcubierre

“Gravity is the essence of space and time.”

Miguel Alcubierre is a physician who graduated from UNAM. He completed a PHD at the University of Wales, in Cardiff, UK. He is a specialist on Einstein’s Theory of General Relativity, which is the modern theory of gravitation. In particular he makes computer simulations of black hole collisions and gravitational waves. Also, in his free time, he contributes to scientific research, and he is a passionate science fiction reader.

The participation in the project of Dr Miguel Alcubierre, director of the institute of nuclear sciences at UNAM, contributes a scientific view of gravitational force and its current implications with the knowledge that we have of the universe at present. It permits a scientific look beyond the theory, where the experience not only leaves behind gravity but also the conditions that identify us as artists or scientists. The absence of gravity gives place to the absence of differences.