

**Objects of the Misanthropocene, a Time Travelling Exhibition from the Illegal Museum of Beyond
Dean Sully (UCL Institute of Archaeology),
Jo Volley (UCL Slade School of Fine Art), Clare Melhuish (UCL Urban Lab)**

The certainty of the particular future is used
to understand the uncertainty of a curated
past

How would future people, whose world
is broken by us, view the moral
justifications used by us in breaking their
world ?

To give our intergenerational
obligations the same kind of urgency
as our obligations to our
contemporary world.



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Exhibition Key Messages:

Speculating about future worlds is an opportunity to think about what we want and do not want to happen and to do something about it, turning plausible and possible futures into preferable futures.

What we consider to be ethical and orthodox now is unlikely to be justifiable to those in the future who will bear the consequences of our actions.

Speculative time-travel in museums gives our intergenerational obligations the same kind of urgency as our obligations to our contemporary world

Living in the Anthropocene transforms our relationship with our pasts and our futures, it requires us to care for more-than-human relationships over extended non-human time scales



A unique opportunity to experience exceptional objects from the future of the Anthropocene, sent back to our present in this landmark temporary exhibition

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Objects of the Misanthropocene

Insouciant Artefacts from the Museums of Beyond

Online exhibition

Opening date: Friday 21st August 0002020

IRL exhibition

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Partners:



Understanding the (Mis)Anthropocene; Technology; Population; Post-Human; Survival; Philanthropocene; Existential Gratitude; This ain't Astronomy this is Genocide; If you like to eat meat Why not try this?; loaned objects from the (other) Museum of Beyond; time-travelling' objects from UCL Collections; Fossils from Another World (Chiswick House)

<https://www.illegalmuseumofbeyond.co.uk/>

In this exhibition we hope to subvert the authority of the museum over the production of narratives about the past.



An Exhibition of Insouciant Objects from the *Illegal* Museum of Beyond

Online exhibition (August 2020) IRL exhibition (January –June 2022) UCL Slade School of Fine Art & UCL Institute of Archaeology



As part of The *Illegal* Town Plan [Rhyl, North Wales] Jimmy Loizeau & Matt Ward, Goldsmiths (2013-present), Critical Speculative Design Project

This ain't Astronomy this is Genocide



This ain't Astronomy, this is genocide.

The near Solar system planetary genocides of the Late Age of Discord were responsible for the deliberate destruction of the Planet Vulcan in 0001919, the obliteration of Planet X in 0001930, the extermination of Pluto in 0002006, and ended in the annihilation of Planet Nine in 0002040. Each time astronomers created new worlds only to destroy them. Despite the inhabitants of these planets being aliens to us, the public outrage on Earth to these genocides led to the extension of universal right-to-life legislation to all inhabitants of our common solar system. This was considered to be ethical behaviour at that time.

1. Rock Sample from Planet X (0001906-0001930)

Voyager 3 Mission 0002074 CE

Planet X, a trans-Neptunian planet existed from 0001906 until its eradication in 0001930.

2. Rock Sample from Pluto (001930-0002006)

Voyager 3 Mission 0002075 CE

Pluto existed as a Planet from 0001930 until its execution by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) in 0002006. There was no outcry from the citizens of planet Earth, but we will later the shame of this genocide forever.

3. Rock Sample from Planet 9 (0002015-0002040 CE)

Voyager 3 Mission 0002076 CE

A super earth sized planet described in 0002015, by 0002040 its existence will be confirmed or extinguished. The impossibility of capturing a tangible form of dark matter from this planet makes this exhibit even more remarkable.

4. Rock Sample from Planet Vulcan (0001859-001919)

SBUDS interplanetary visit in 0002500 CE.

Planet Vulcan was identified in 0001859 CE, to satisfy observations of planetary movements predicted in a Newtonian universe. By 0001919 CE, Einstein's General Theory of Relativity explained the movement of the planets differently, which required the disappearance of the Planet Vulcan from our solar system. The arbitrary removal of Vulcan has led to campaigns for the toppling of memorial statues of Einstein from public squares for his role in the planetary genocide. It also raises serious concerns about the veracity of the Vulcan rock sample exhibited here.

Rock Samples from Planet Vulcan, Planet 9, Planet X, and Pluto provide evidence of the instability of scientific interpretations of the world. We should remind ourselves of the scientific endeavours that have proved to be delusions. The science of the past, established in the laboratories of our universities and their esatz bodega bars, becomes dismissed as an illusion today. Beware scientific facts standing as evidence of the reality of the world. Let this be a call to arms to prevent other genocides at the hands of these planet killing IAU astronomers.

Cofiwch Dryweryn
because this ain't Progress
This is genocide

Protect Planet 9
because this ain't Astronomy
This is genocide

Remember Planet Vulcan
because this ain't Newtonian physics
This is genocide

Never forget Planet X
because this ain't Planetary Science
This is genocide

Justice for Pluto
because this ain't Astrophysics
This is genocide

Objects of the

A Level 'Studying Explanations from Scientific Museum of Science'

Misanthropocene

Free Exhibition

Objects of Science
Museum of Science



Objects of the Misanthropocene Method

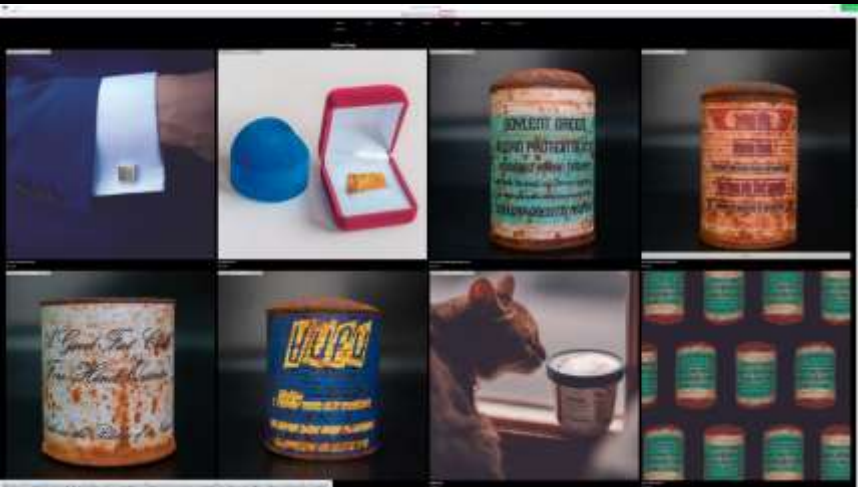
The speculative insouciant method of the time travelling exhibit

A believable future world:

- Asking how the everyday lives of 'real' future inhabitants of our world are diminished by our choices, which makes visible intergenerational obligations

A believable exhibition:

- specialist heritage skills help create an authentic experience that match the expectations of museum exhibition visitors, which helps suspend disbelief about time travel
- The authentication comes from the quality of the authorising practice, as a form of theatrical performance.
- The same heritage performance is used in the fabrication of authorised heritage places and objects to provide an authentic heritage visitor experience of the past.

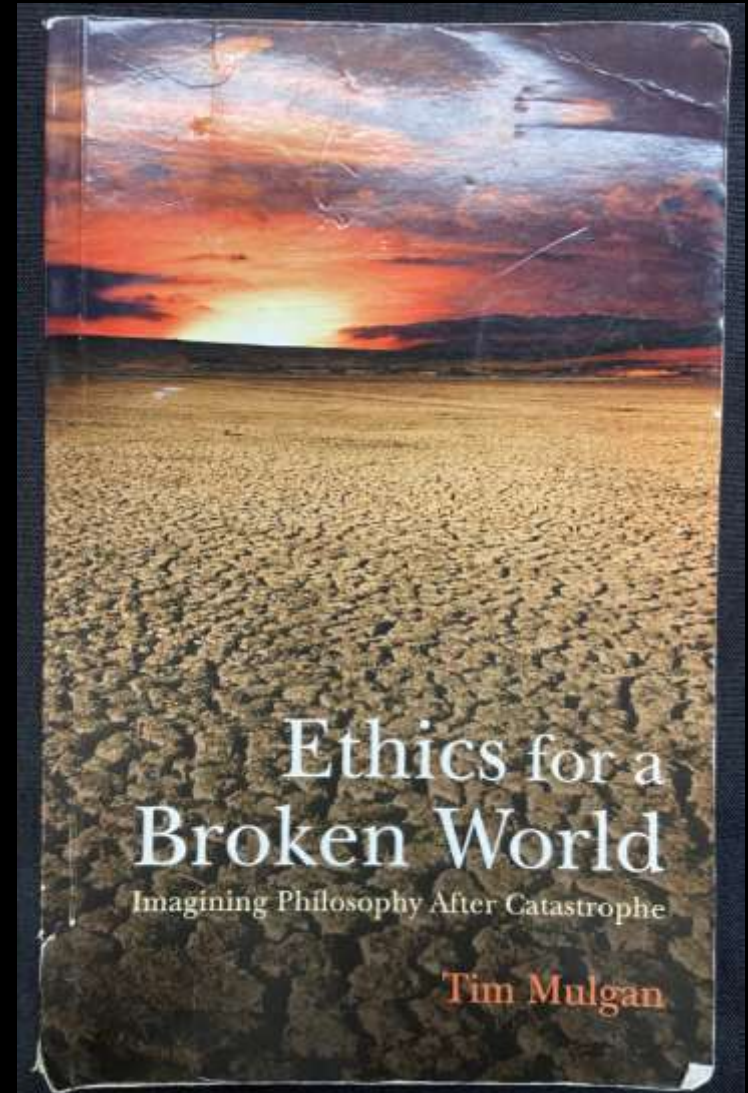


An intergenerational critique of our current actions by future people whose world is broken by us

Mulgan, Tim. 2011. *Ethics for a broken world, imagining philosophy after catastrophe*. Acumen: Durham.

Mulgan Tim, 2014. Ethics For Possible Futures. *The Aristotelian Society Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society*, Vol. cxiv, Part 1.

Mulgan , Tim., 2018. Answering to Future People: Responsibility for Climate Change in a Breaking World. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, Vol. 35, No. 3, August 2018.



World inhabited by the exhibit:

In retrospect, it was obvious that late capitalism would produce a broken future. A prevailing cultural & temporal myopia sustained the illusion that a future would evolve seamlessly from the present.

In the transition to a broken world, democratic societies became vulnerable to their broken promises, exacerbated by increased external threats of climate change, overpopulation, refugees, and resource wars.

Despite the desire to lessen the severity of future human suffering in the absence of sufficient resources for all to survive, it was thought better to continue to steal from future peoples, in order to secure enough resources for everyone currently alive.

The knowledge of this intergenerational theft created a repulsion of the moral choices made in previous generations that forced severe moral dilemmas on those who came after.

Case study: Survival Lottery Ticket



The **survival lottery** exhibit is a fabricated object in the form of an archaeologically recovered paper ticket. Two recent UK National lottery tickets were artificially aged to replicate visual changes that take place during archaeological burial. This was conserved and mounted into a pre-existing historic museum presentation case. Five object labels are presented in the online exhibition from Early-Mid Anthropocene Human Curators

Source: Mulgan, Tim. 0002011. Ethics for a broken world, imagining philosophy after catastrophe. Acumen: Durham.



11 Zippicamknicks

c. 0002495 CE

Leicester, England

Devoid of the capability to love, a sterile human population maintains perfect happiness, free to experience sexual pleasure from anyone they meet. Zippicamknicks are an efficient development in female lingerie design. Economically constructed from synthetic viscose, the zippicamknicks were originally designed to be disposable after a single use, making them a convenient fast-fashion wardrobe choice. Due to a plastic shortage, this example appears to have been substantially re-used. MB 5683.12
 Aldous Huxley, 0001932



12 Ticket for the Survival Lottery

c. 0001981 CE

Rendlesham, Suffolk

This future is our broken world, where resources are insufficient to meet everyone's basic needs. Everyone is entered into a periodic lottery, the winners of which receive sufficient resources to survive, the losers are left with nothing and do not survive. Everyone has an equal chance in the lottery to survive, but not everyone can. MB 2973.14
 Tim Mulgan, 0002011



13-17 Stockpile of human meat cans

c. 0002100-0002200 CE

United Kingdom

Cannibalism occurs at different times and places in certain circumstances. Unusually, these cans of differently branded human meat were produced commercially for human consumption. The food shortages and overpopulation of the early Anthropocene, caused a flood of these products onto the market, offering a cheap alternative to increasingly rare non-human meat sources. A large hoard of these meat cans was excavated from the ruins of a domestic building, among the remains of 2,000 rolls of toilet paper, suggesting that the inhabitants had stockpiled supplies during the COVID-0002152 pandemic. MB 2109.7



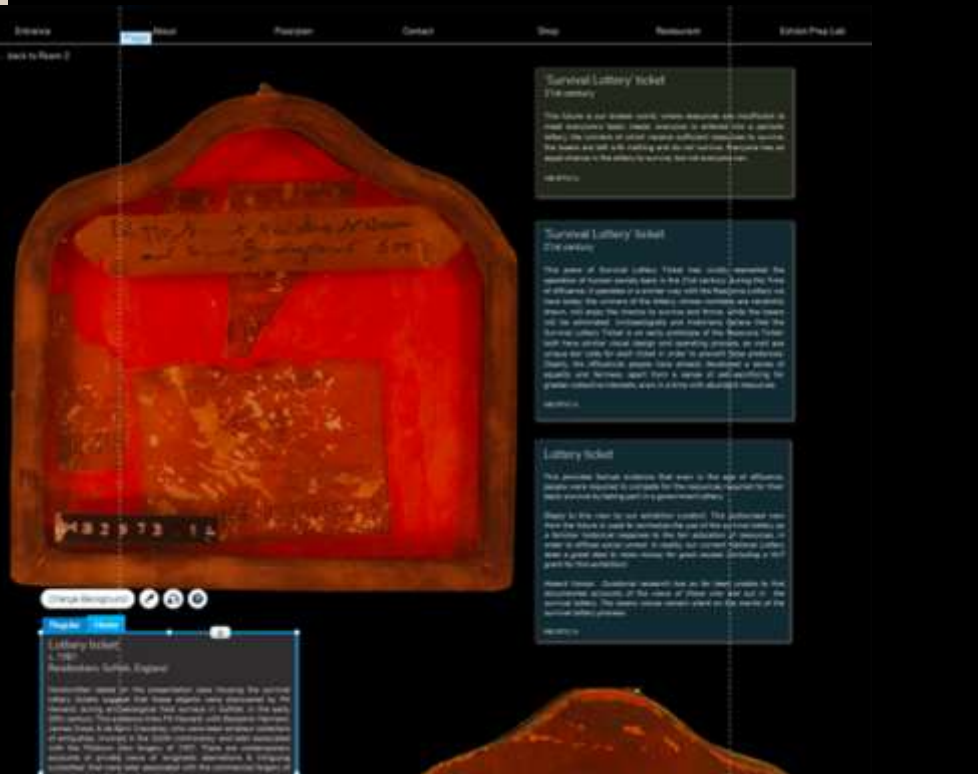
Lottery ticket

This provides factual evidence that even in the age of affluence, people were required to compete for the resources required for their basic survival by taking part in a government lottery.

(Reply to this view by our exhibition curator): *This authorised view from the future is used to normalise the use of the survival lottery as a familiar historical response to the fair allocation of resources, in order to diffuse social unrest. In reality, our current National Lottery does a great deal to raise money for good causes (including a HLF grant for this exhibition).*

Absent Voices: *Curatorial research has so far been unable to find documented accounts of the views of those who lost out in the survival lottery. The losers voices remain silent on the merits of the survival lottery process.*

MB 2973.14



Fossils from another world to be produced Chiswick House and Gardens

Cheswick House workshop, July 14 2022



Fossilised curse tablet fragments



Fragments of a fossilised curse tablet from a human midden deposit. Its fragmentary lines of script, written in an unknown language (*Voces mysticae*), are thought to contain spells, invocations, or prayers. The tablet was broken into small pieces prior to deposition, which may have formed part of an activation ritual associated with this ancient spiritual practice.

Loaned objects from the (other) Museum of Beyond (www.museumofbeyond.org)

Ceremonial cup

A rare and exquisite cup dating from the Third Ice Age



Plastic Madonna

Washed up at Shingle Street on the Suffolk coast, this 'Madonna' figure is believed to have originated from Lourdes in the late 20th century and its contents are believed to be holy water. The use of plastic is significant: chosen for its ability to last for an eternity.



Head-dress

Originally used as some kind of marker in the late 20 century to early 21 century, this Head-dress was subsequently 'mined' from a 21 century landfill site, and was used by early 22 century settlers as high status head-regalia. Its status derives from the wearer being unable to do anything practical whilst wearing it.



Cowboy

Said to be the last British cowboy. Subsequent cowboys were Chinese.

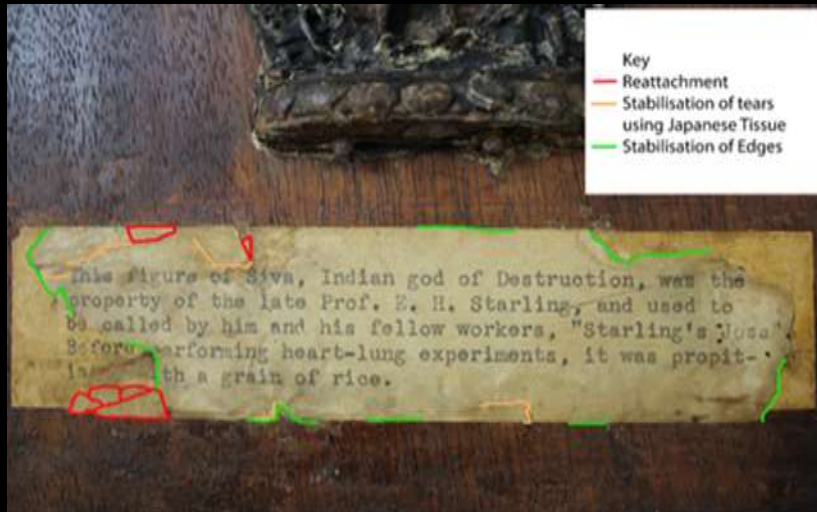
Plaque of Shiva

UCL Physiology Collection Physio 005

Student name: Letitia Steer

Lab number: 9367

The object depicts has a small raised clay Shiva riding on a donkey holding two objects and is mounted on a wooden plaque supported by two nails. The wood has been varnished, and has a number of historic labels adhered both to the back and front of the plaque. Attached to the object is a plastic bag that holds a number of rice grains, which have been used as offerings. There are white accretions, red pigment and black paint that overlay the low fired surface of the Shiva itself.



How do our carefully selected words have material meaning?
 How do they mutually construct the reality of our world ?
 How is this constructed reality given belief by its concrete manifestation as objects in the world ?



Starling's Joss (1899-1927)?



Sully's Joss (1892-1903)?

The point of creating future worlds is for people to think about what they want and do not want to happen, to do something about it

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This version of the heuristics of fear, populates the consequences of our current decisions in the everyday lives of future people, whose world is broken by us

Living in the Anthropocene, confronting the Climate Crisis, transforms our relationship with our pasts and futures.

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These serious issues made accessible with experimental playfulness that helps to reimagine how heritage can contribute to living as-well-as-possible in more-than-human worlds.