

Press Release

## CLIMATE PANDEMICS Dark Euphoria

A MAK Exhibition

Exhibition Venue CREATIVE CLIMATE CARE GALLERY  
MAK, Stubenring 5, 1010 Vienna  
Exhibition Dates 28 May – 3 October 2021  
Opening Hours Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (until further notice)  
Wed–Sun 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

The exhibition *CLIMATE PANDEMICS: Dark Euphoria* takes science fiction literature, specifically climate fiction, as a starting point for artistic reflection: it plays on the genre's ability to link environmental themes to the experience of living in another world as if we were a part of that world and thus to evoke more intense emotional reactions than through simply reading information about the causes and effects of climate change.

Climate catastrophes, epidemics, and their consequences for society and coexistence are the theme of many post-apocalyptic stories and novels by writers like Margaret Atwood and James Graham Ballard. They allow the readers to imagine the drastic restrictions and changes that such events might bring about—and thus make them aware of the urgency of our situation. How can we attempt to live "post-apocalyptically" without first having to live through the apocalypse?

Two Vienna-based artists, Kerstin von Gabain and Ivan Pérard, have been invited to develop new works for the exhibition. In her work, Kerstin von Gabain is interested in themes from anime, horror films, science fiction, medical history, as well as the presentation of historical collections. In her sculptural works molded in wax or gypsum, the artist examines (human) bones, bone tools, animal-bone oracles, and the mythical powers of these earlier analog technologies. Fossil bones and other organic materials are also used to sequence the aDNA (ancient DNA) of long-extinct species, offering scope for speculation about their appearance and living habits.

Ivan Pérard creates filigree 3-D print sculptures whose forms suggest fragments of mysterious, organic machines from a high-tech future. The artist is interested in the theory that molecular nanotechnology can replicate itself (Grey goo scenario), seamlessly adapting its shape and size to

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its environment and tasks. Should this process get out of control, the result would be "ecophagy," the eating up of the biosphere and thus ultimately the annihilation of all life on earth.

The exhibition shows the archaeology of a future that may never happen. Many generations after us, relics from another time suggest the existence of a world in which social inequality, genetic engineering, pandemics, and the climate crisis eventually culminated in an apocalyptic event. How did human society adapt to the new reality? What new technologies emerged? What remained of the "before"?

With the subtitle *Dark Euphoria* the project challenges the "thrill" [Angstlust] that fictional and mythological doomsday scenarios arouse in us. But climate fiction always contains a kernel of scientific truth ... The exhibition is accompanied by a conceptual short story.

Artists: Kerstin von Gabain, Ivan Pérad  
Curator: Marlies Wirth

Press images are available at [MAK.at/en/press](http://MAK.at/en/press) and [viennabiennale.org](http://viennabiennale.org)

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