



an outlook

An art-production and event-curation realm exploring the confluence of art-world gamification and Minecraft metagame. Volume 1 depicts a timeline of events: the inception of the first two group shows, the curatorial detonation of the venue, content production for the artist Simon Denny and a series of member-only nature-themed workshops. Hosted by Jan Berger.

bauen wohnen denken

A durational roleplay series occupied with the ludic formation of cultural mythologies and the subjectivities they produce. Volume 2 offers a collection of lore: a subjective ethnology of the project's three speculative cultures, entirely produced by participants of the format via commission. Hosted by Jan Berger, Katharina Hantke, Nikolaus Kockel & Nora Schön.

With Great Thanks

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Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien



Cultural institutions represent power, order, and prestige. Rooted in tradition, their mythological status stems from operational practices of exclusion — they determine value, meaning, and authenticity within this current late-stage capitalist hellscape. The bounded and impenetrable institution positions itself as an ideal, a perpetual end-goal which one must have always already reached or else be always grinding towards. Alternatively, the institution exists to be fought against, to inspire anti-establishment movements and utopic visions outside of the institutional framework.

It would be inaccurate to situate *an outlook* as a rebellion against the structure of the institution — rather, it embraces the ambivalence of simultaneously working within, outside of, and around the institutional framework. Hosted within ‘virtual space,’ it is easy to identify the *Mythical Institution* as a simulation of institutionalality: with a lack of physical presence, a collection of avatars manipulate game-world pixels to re-create the experience of an establishment gallery space.

However, virtual spaces and game-worlds hold no less authenticity than real-world institutional spaces, rather, they are embedded and coded with the same biases, hierarchies, and assumptions that exist offline. Online worlds are not a utopic ‘blank slate,’ and authenticity here is still negotiated through symbolic cultural value — rendering both virtual and non-virtual institutional experiences similarly ‘unreal.’ *an outlook* provides an opportunity to acknowledge the inherent simulatedness of the dirt-space cultural institution itself, rather than situating itself as simply a satirical simulation of the ‘real.’

Where the *Mythical Institution* promises a utopic curatorial space for emerging contemporary art, *an outlook* reminds us of the impossibility of that promise. The events hosted by *an outlook* play with the permanence and temporality of institutions, of touching-grass, and of virtual space. They envision a ritualistic utopia, aesthetically presented, and casually demolish it with explosives. Inspired by the romanticist fantasy of the curative garden, the gallery brings the hyperreal experience of ‘nature’ into virtual space — and promptly invites ‘nature’ to greet them with a shrug.

We are invited to the Mythical Institution to play and imagine a twisting of the establishment gallery space alongside its exhibitors, while considering the ephemerality of virtual space and the constancy and permanence of the institution. Or, the permanence of virtual space and the ephemerality of the institution... Does this distinction matter? We’ll let our friends, the bees, decide.

by Sarah Trottier

The space of ritual is one outside the temporality of everyday life. It has been stripped from our lives by the ever-present compulsion to produce ourselves day by day, moment by moment. In ritual, the self is negated — no ego, no authenticity, no “real you” — only a play of prescribed movements and actions that are vital to the composition of community. While the virtual is frequently a space in which the compulsion towards production is extended, perhaps there still exists the possibility there of carving out a realm of mythopoesis.

Virtual game-spaces like Minecraft show promise as a suitable setting for ritual myth-making. The video game exists as one of the few realms of play, as distinct from the realm of work and production, though market imperatives infiltrate its purity and lead to its corruption.

The *Mythical Institution* functions as both a prefiguration of the new space of rituality that will save us, and conversely whose absence will doom us. It asserts that virtuality need not be a hindrance to community. It enshrines its community in a museum.

In creating a museum, we declare our values. It is the microcosmic showpiece that represents ourselves to ourselves. The museum of the Aventurines, Carnelians, and Krystallos is the hyperdistillate of this project, preserving for eternity the achievements of this exercise in myth-making. Its construction envisioned by the progressive Aventurines, who worship technological capacity in a world whose entire existence is composed of lines of code.

Empowering possibility begets capacity.

Engaging together to build, builds the space for novelty.

Games in their otherworldliness may be able to tell us something about existing as it is conceived apart from existing-in-the-world. “Existence” does not require materiality. This is one among many lessons to be gleaned from time in the virtual. The ritual suicides and subsequent respawns of the Krystallos encourages a development of this line of thought. Displacement of presence and identity beyond first the material body, then the body of the virtual avatar, whose “life” is given as sacrifice to and propitiation of the community’s ancestors. The Carnelians affirm the baselessness of egoic existence through their capacity to “understand the connection of lifes (sic), energies and spiritualities.”

Some of my oldest memories of experiencing the unheimlich were in game space. Its full potential has yet to be explored. “Virtual Reality” does not require a headset when you can make the virtual into something real.

by Nate Sloan

