

FACT ANNOUNCES NEW MAJOR EXHIBITION FOR AUTUMN



Image: Miku Aoki, Zoe (2019). Image courtesy the artist.

***Future Ages Will Wonder* will open on 28 October**

This Autumn, FACT opens a major new exhibition of works by nine UK and international artists. Opening on 28 October, *Future Ages Will Wonder* presents an “alternative museum” of artworks that use science and technology to question our past and offer new ways of understanding who we are and where we belong.

The artworks on display bring together traditional mediums such as textiles, sculpture, and photography with virtual reality, computer algorithms and synthetic DNA. Through this wide range of materials and art-making, the exhibition refocuses where we place attention and what we value: reimagining stories about our past, present and future. Turning attention to alternative histories, the political and ethical issues found in archaeology, botany, genetics and the use of technology in our daily lives, visitors are invited to behold and ‘wonder’ at the advancement of science and technology.



Future Ages Will Wonder premieres three new commissions by artists **Larry Achiampong** and **David Blandy** (UK), **Yarli Allison** (Canada/Hong Kong), **Breakwater** (South Korea/UK), a new work by **Boedi Widjaja** (Singapore/Indonesia) alongside works by **Ai Hasegawa** and **Miku Aoki** (Japan), and **Trisha Baga** (USA). The exhibition is curated by Annie Jael Kwan, an independent curator, researcher and educator, who has collaborated with FACT over the last year to develop the show.

Greeting visitors as they enter FACT is an installation of a Victorian museum and interactive 'cabinet of curiosities' filled with large hand-embroidered tapestry hangings and stuffed mutant specimens, which visitors can inspect and explore. Sharing a birth year and story with Dolly the Sheep, **Miku Aoki** is fascinated by the work of John Hunter, the 18th century surgeon, pioneer of artificial insemination and researcher of the mutant cell immortalisation

For this exhibition, FACT has commissioned and supported **Yarli Allison** to produce a new multimedia installation that includes watercolour drawings and an immersive Virtual Reality (VR) film that recreates Liverpool's old Chinatown and tells the stories of its lost Chinese sailors. Connecting through time and across the seas, Allison exhibits *In Virtual Return We (can't) Dehaunt*, a moving-image piece that maps the memories of four queer (trans)migrants to reconstruct their homes they left behind in British colonial Hong Kong.

In their newly commissioned CGI moving-image work, **Larry Achiampong** and **David Blandy** invite visitors on an epic journey through time across the colonial sites of archeology to present day DNA data mining and social media image servers. Working with the Department of Archaeology at the University of Liverpool, the interrogative work reveals a complex history of genetic and cultural labelling which can be held responsible for issues and boundaries that exist today.

In **Trisha Baga's** film, *1620*, the artist explores the mythology of Plymouth Rock, the site where Pilgrims first supposedly set foot in the (now known) United States of America, and now commemorated as a geological symbol of European colonisation. Fragmented stories of 'pre-colonial' America are extracted from stem cells from the rock, reconstructed and enacted by a playhouse troupe of actors.

For his multisite trilogy of artworks, **Boedi Widjaja** encodes his synthetic and hybridised DNA as a linguistic source, along with ancient and original texts and cultural almanacs to create visual poetry and placemarkers that consider the impossibilities of language after the ruptures of personal histories, as experienced by the artist's migrations from China to Indonesia and Singapore. Widjaja uses science and technology to extract and embed his DNA into the physical artworks, reclaiming space and land for his voice, work and identity to exist.

Bringing together her interests in biotechnology and design solutions, **Ai Hasagawa's** speculative works consider the 'traditional' family unit and how genetic research and the



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desire to discover new models of caregiving and child-rearing affect the possibilities for building families or communities. Using computer-generated imagery, photography, and design, the works aim to stimulate discussions about the social, cultural and ethical possibilities of communal care and kinship.

Artist duo **Breakwater** (Youngsook Choi and Taey lohe), present *Fermented Flower*, a 'healing' tapestry and audio installation which interweaves historical images with botanical symbols. The delicate embroidery of dandelion - a symbol of Korean activism, and Chinese Hat plants - historically referred to as 'Coolie's Cap', alongside the names of those who perished at Morecambe Bay, recuperate these humble plants to question embedded structures of racism in botany and beyond.

The opening of *Future Ages Will Wonder* launches *Radical Ancestry*, FACT's year long exploration into the sense of belonging. Over the next 12 months, a programme of exhibitions, projects, residencies and events at FACT will look at how history, geography, biology and culture shape our ancestral history and question how technology can help us to explore new ways of thinking and experimenting with who we are.

The first of these events will expand on the artworks displayed in *Future Ages Will Wonder* and include alternative heritage walking tours with artist Yarli Allison, a film screening with Q&A by artist Michelle Williams Gamaker, a family day at FACT for Lunar New Year led by Asia-Art-Activism and a new artist podcast series, entitled Gaining Ground.

Future highlights from the *Radical Ancestry* programme include major new commissions by Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Larissa Sansour, Rae-Yen Song and Eburn Sodipo plus the unveiling of four new digital artworks by recipients of the FACT Together 2021 Residency.

Nicola Triscott, CEO/Director at FACT, said: *"Annie Jael Kwan has been FACT's curator-in-residence, remotely, through 2021 and we are delighted to announce her resulting exhibition, Future Ages Will Wonder, which launches our thematic year of Radical Ancestry. Despite sadly not having been able to be present in Liverpool due to the pandemic, Annie has worked intensively with the FACT team and the artists to curate this beautiful and intriguing exhibition, which interweaves personal histories and discoveries from contemporary science to create new narratives through which we can rethink belonging."*

Annie Jael Kwan, Curator said: *"Our fascination with scientific discovery and advancement is driven by the desire to better understand the world around us, and ultimately, our place and role in it. Radical Ancestry has opened up such complex narratives to explore curatorially, and I'm honoured to work with these outstanding artists from across the UK and internationally. Their inspiring practices provide such rich connections from the microscopic to the interstellar, in telling us old and new stories about humanity."*



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FACT is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and is funded by Liverpool City Council, with support from Culture Liverpool. *Future Ages Will Wonder* is supported by *Artsformation*, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

www.fact.co.uk/event/future-ages-will-wonder

ABOUT ANNIE JAEL KWAN

Annie Jael Kwan is an independent curator, researcher and educator who has previously worked with the Manchester Art Gallery, South London Gallery, Haus der Kunst (Munich), and FramerFramed (Netherlands). In 2012, Kwan founded the curatorial initiative, Something Human, to focus on the critical ideas surrounding movement across borders. She leads Asia-Art-Activism (AAA) an interdisciplinary and intergenerational network of artists, curators and academics working in the UK and transnationally, and is the instigating council member of Asia Forum to be presented in Venice 2022.

ABOUT FACT

FACT is the UK's leading film and media arts centre, bringing people, art and technology together. Based in Liverpool, FACT's award-winning building houses two galleries, four cinemas, a café and bar. Now celebrating 18 years in its Liverpool home, FACT has welcomed over 5 million visitors and commissioned and presented over 350 new media and digital artworks from artists including Nam June Paik, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Wu Tsang, Ryoichi Kurokawa, Agnes Varda, Isaac Julien and Marianna Simnett. fact.co.uk