

DELEUZE'S NOMADODOLOGY REVISITED: NOMADISM, 'NOMADISM' AND THE JEWISH ART

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Nomadism and pastoralism, taken in its binary opposition to Sedentism and agriculture, is fundamental to the history of humanity. The Bible (as well as Near Eastern mythology) pictures it as the first civilizational division in the world, occurring between the first pair of brothers born to the first Man, Adam. The story ends badly – one brother kills the other in a conflict over sacrifice; it is of importance, however, that the sympathies of the biblical authors are definitely on the side of the nomad brother, Hevel (Abel). It is his sacrifice that the Creator accepts, and it is him who becomes a victim himself. While the bad brother becomes the founder of the first city, the ancient Hebrews associate their heritage (and thus to a certain extent themselves) with the third brother, who replaced Hevel in his role of the ancestor of all the pastoralists. It is specifically interesting, since the writing down of biblical stories, if not their inception, according to the contemporary historical views, occurred in a mostly sedentary social context, and even probably in a society with only partially, if any, nomadic origins. It is only later that historical calamities transformed Jewish civilization into a Diaspora shape, thus realizing in history what previously was but an old mythology. This suggests that, in Ancient Israel, pastoralism was metaphorically used by a sedentary society to express some conceptions or images of its social and existential Ideal. I will use this historical paradox as a model for an overall Jewish hermeneutic project to elucidate the connections to nomadism that exist in the contemporary art and its social-cultural environment.

The Occidental civilization and, to a certain extent, the contemporary Global culture remain in several aspects sedentary-centered. The city is popularly conceived as the center and the marker of civilization itself, as hinted in the very etymology of the word 'civilisation' from Latin 'civis' i.e. polis, city. Nomadic heritage is thus represented as inferior, and nomadic experience is suppressed if not excluded. However, nowadays, in a global world, we can see the interconnections between the cities, provoking mobility and exchange, which actually surpass and deconstruct the stationary and 'sedentary' nature of what a city used to be. Contemporary art, reflecting this post-urban process, is eventually much more connected to mobility and specific forms of 'nomadism' than ever. The new social-cultural world of global communication, I suggest, becomes a social environment with profound roots in what might be conceived as 'nomadic'. The case of Judaism as inventing and promoting nomadic ancestry may, then, be taken as a metaphor or even a paradigm for re-creating our own new nomadic past through the mirror of our Art. The artistic strategies of choosing a nomadic ancestry are thus close to the ways implemented by Feminine art and Gender criticism in their struggle for equality of representation.

(1) Choosing a nomadic ancestry

I've begun my speech from the radical antitheses between the two ways of life, the nomadic and the sedentary. The contemporary situation seems to be completely melting the two, thus denying such a borderline. We are sitting in an ancient town, in stone buildings, like 'normal' sedentary folks – but at the same time we all come from different countries, regions and places, and the artistic project 'Nomada' migrates with us across the whole globe. The archeological investigation of the ancient Israelites had shown, that neither existed a strict border 3000 years ago between the pastoralists and the agriculturalists in the region. On the contrary, the members of one same clan or even family could participate in both sectors of the ancient local economics; one same city housed also the nomads for the rainy winter period; it was only for a half of the year that the two sectors of the society separated, and the life of the two was naturally intertwined. Thus, in fact, the Jewish case shows that the gap between nomadic and sedentary ways of life was not so great in some ancient societies, too.

However, in radical difference from the Mesopotamian, Greek and especially Egyptian neighbors, ancient Israelites seem to associate themselves with their non-sedentary ancestors. One of the oldest biblical songs, the Song of Moses (Deut 32) implies, that the Creator had found his chosen people in the middle of nowhere, in the desert; the great biblical saga of Exodus dates the establishment of all the crucial cultic, political and artistic institutions to a period of living in tents amidst the Wilderness. The two main yearly Jewish calendrical feasts, the Spring one (Pesah-Matzot) and the Fall one (Sukkot) celebrate the 'exodus' from sedentary state into the wilderness (even though, historically, at the latter was originally rather a celebration of return from it). All that shows a profound proto-historical interest in nomadism and a deliberate choice of nomadic ancestry among the ancient Israelites.



"Collared-rim" jar: the most remarkable invention of proto-israelite artisanship.

Contemporary research questions whether such an ancestry existed at all or was mostly invented. No strict difference in material culture is found between the first Israelites and the sedentary Canaanites, except for the obvious homogenous poverty of the former in contrast to the presence of an elite sector in the life of the city-dwellers. It is probable, that the main element of the formation of the proto-Israelite population was not sedentarisation of the nomads, as suggested earlier, but an opposite movement of peasants escaping from Egypt-ruled city-states and their hora – to mountain villages on the uncontrolled territories. Those new little villages, later organized as Israelite clans, were only partially nomadic, while partially engaged in grain production to sustain their independence from their pre-exodus compatriots who remained in the traditional agricultural areas. Thus, the idealization of the nomadic way of life in the Bible, especially the story of the Exodus to the Wilderness, is probably not a product of true historical remembrance, but a mythological reflection of a radical rupture with the familiar city-based order.

The interpretation of this rupture in terms of nomadic descentance, and of the city-based life in terms of temporarily oppression and slavery "in Egypt", presupposes, I believe, a definite cultural choice, i. e. acceptance of some strategies of real nomads towards the outer cultural world, a creation of a nomadic utopia. The question is, then, what actual benefits – and, more generally, what actual outfits – are achieved through such a choice. What changes, if you decide to be a descendant of nomads? And what does it mean for contemporary art?

(2) Nomadology and the Difference

The term 'nomadology' in the name of my paper comes from Gilles Deleuze's treatise with the same name, making part of his monumental collaboration with 'anti-psychiatrist' Felix Guattari, published as the second volume of their "Capitalism and Schizophrenia" in 1982, also known as "Milles Plateaux" (A Thousand of Plateaus).



Sukkah ("tabernacle" or "booth") – Jewish quasi-nomadic tent for the Feast of Tabernacles (photo from Wiki).

In this very idiosyncratic work, modern philosopher addresses the Nomadism as a displaced concept, which remains misunderstood and underestimated by the European historians, because their worldview is shaped by the Statehood. The History, he writes, is a State-produced discipline, which makes it State-centered, while 'Nomadology' is an imaginary alternative type of knowledge. According to Deleuze, the relative feebleness of statehood in nomadic societies – and, especially, nomadic antagonism to cities and their agricultural economies, are neither feebleness nor ignorance of city-centered state institutes, but a fundamental phenomenological opposition that has to be estimated on its own: its rather an anti-ideology, opposing the oppressive phenomenon of the State as such.

Deleuze illustrates his thesis in several ways, especially paying attention to the notions of Space, Number and Goal-setting ("affection"). For instance, the Space in his phenomenology of Nomadism is not ribbed or striated by any natural or cultural factors like roads, channels or private territories, but "smooth", i. e. all the time the same, but also all the time different. He compares this image to the model of an ever-changing, never stable world, rejected by Socrates and Plato. He also provides a practical analogy to those two types of spaces in the difference between the game of Chess versus the game of Go, where all the cells (and all the figures) are of the same value, and the figures are not stationary located on a 'striated' board, but appear suddenly from nowhere.

This notion is important in relation to the sacred space: no specific space in Nomadology might be labeled the location of the Absolute; the God always surpasses all the possible space and only manifests Himself temporarily in one or another place.

In a similar way he shows that the nomadic notion of Number is "numbering, not numbered": both Moses or Genghiz Khan do divide their peoples into complex groups of 10s, 100s and 1000s, but not in order to create some statistics according to their fixed location in space, though rather to prescribe their movement in the space. Counting the Jews in the way the State does it, on the contrary, is strictly prohibited by the Biblical God. Finally, Deleuze shows a fundamental difference between migration and 'nomadism': while a migrant is de-territorized, it is phenomenologically a temporary loss, even if re-territorisation is far or foggy; on the contrary, a nomad is "re-territorizing in his very de-territorization", both owing and not-owing the "smooth space" of the route. The route itself becomes home for a nomad, as evidenced also by the lexical specifics of some nomadic peoples, Deleuze explains; a nomad is at home, while travelling.

(3) From nomadic ancestors to global textual community

The Phenomenological approach of Deleuze and Guattari helps us to understand the relationship between the Jewish sedentary mythology – and the nomadism taken as an idea, per se. Ancient Jews made a cultural choice in favor of nomadic ancestry, because they looked for a way of appropriation of a part of this nomadic idea – namely, the relationship to soil. While the great Empires of antiquity proclaimed their right to the conquered territories, including Israel and Judaea, the Jews opposed their claim by declaring all the land being God's, eluding any possession. And even if God's will



Nechama Golan, You Shall Walk in Good Ways, 1999, photocopies of Talmud pages and polymer glue

was once against Jewish territorial autonomy (which always was temporarily and relative, too), His will could also turn to granting the Jews 'their' land again (and again, only relatively in respect to His world sovereignty).

Through this choice the Jews, then, distanced from re-territorisation on their land after Babylonian captivity; instead, they de-territorized polemically the Empire itself, making use of a phenomenologically 'nomadic' idea, disrupting the 'pagan' link between a territorial people and its territorial gods-ancestors. However, a new foundation was needed to constitute Jewish unity in those pseudo-nomadic situation – and the Text of the Bible became this

new foundation. Post-Captivity Jews re-territorized in the Text and through the Text. This also permitted them to evade assimilation, while preserving greater mobility than other Ancient Mediterranean local populations – and to keep a specific kind of ex-territorial unity through the Text through all the 2000-years-long way in the Diaspora. The Diaspora itself might be seen as a kind of 'sedentary nomadism', in which not an individual person, but the whole civilization is the subject of quasi-nomadic displacement (still keeping to more or less sedentary life on the level of private individuals).

While Deleuze says nothing about Art, his ideas might be useful to understand the history of Jewish Art as well. For centuries Jewish religion – in the same anti-'pagan' and anti-Empire tendency – forbade depiction, especially statuary, of any living objects, especially people. This hate for statues – which became later opposition to Greek and Christian cultural practices – also revives in mind the nomadic practical approach for Art, which would be always more applied, more movable and performative in comparison to the sedentary art-production, connected to shrines and museums. Though in several circumstances through history those religious bans were understood milder, no separate place for Jewish Art existed inside Jewish civilization, and mostly applied arts were practiced.

It is only the Contemporary Art, with its movement toward social applicability, multimedia techniques, textual turn and refuse from classic figurativism, that made the Jewish Art possible. Taking part in interactive, performative or digital art a Jew might represent herself both a contemporary artist – and a traditional Jew, keeping in touch with the mythological pseudo-nomadic antifigurativism. This case shows, how nomadic (or 'nomadic') trends may be useful for constructing a world with much more attention to Difference and much more opposition to the Totality.

A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THOUGHT AND NEW MEDIA & SCIENCE ARTS

Alexandra Dementieva
(Artist, curator, researcher, Belgium)

“Our conference today focuses on the theme central to this exhibition, ‘Art and Nomads: The Other Nature,’ with a significant emphasis on the project ‘Nomadism’.”

In contemporary society it refers to a lifestyle or mode of living characterized by a lack of permanent settlement and a constant state of mobility. This concept has evolved significantly in recent times, influenced by various factors, including technology, globalization, economic shifts, and changing societal norms.

In my creative practice I use new technologies and a variety of digital tools. This preference motivates me to center my presentation on the evolving trends encompassing multimedia, the convergence of art and science, and the profound concept of Nomadology. It was initially introduced and extensively explored in the philosophical domain through the collaborative work of French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. It was first mentioned in their text “A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,” published in 1980.

I have to emphasize while the two concepts Nomadology and Nomadism may share some underlying themes related to movement and non-linearity, Nomadology in philosophy is more abstract and deals with a broader range of topics, challenging fixed modes of thinking and organizational structures. Meanwhile, nomadism refers to a specific cultural or lifestyle practice characterized by mobility and adaptability. It’s essential to recognize that they operate within different realms – philosophy and cultural anthropology – and have different scopes and emphases.

In the ever-evolving landscape of contemporary art, “Nomadology” has found a natural home in the world of new media art. It explores the concept of becoming, fluidity, and multiplicity in systems rather than focusing on stability and permanence. It’s a conceptual framework that explores the nature of movement, change, and the non-linear, often presenting a counterpoint to more rigid, centralized systems. It aligns perfectly with the innovative technology driving the evolution of art.

Similarly to digital art, the convergence of art and science espouses an interdisciplinary ethos. It embraces the amalgamation of diverse disciplines, ideas, and methodologies, encouraging innovation and novel perspectives by transcending disciplinary boundaries. Digital art is inherently fluid, marked by its ability to adapt and change over time. Nomadology’s emphasis on changeability finds resonance in it, where the boundaries between the static and the dynamic blur. Artists working in this realm use innovative technologies to create artworks that evolve with user interaction, environment, or even time itself.

There are many artists who have been working in this field for more than half a century, so I name only a few of them, mentioning their work, which I like and find very interesting. One of the key aspects of Nomadology is its challenge to hierarchical structures. Interactive installations invite viewers to engage directly with the artwork, dissolving the traditional artist- viewer hierarchy. This shift fosters a sense of agency, inviting viewers to explore and contribute to the evolving narrative.

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer’s “” (2006) features a space filled with light bulbs, each pulsating in sync with the participant’s heartbeat. Viewers place their fingers on sensors, and their heartbeats are projected through the light bulbs. By directly involving the audience’s physiological data, the installation challenges traditional hierarchies, emphasizing the viewers’ active participation in shaping the artwork. (<https://www.lozano-hemmer.com>)

“*Very Nervous System*” (1986-1990) is an interactive installation made by **David Rokeby** (<http://www.davidrokeby.com>) that tracks the movement of viewers within a space using video cameras and computer software. As viewers move, the system detects their actions and generates corresponding responses in real-time, such as altering sounds. Another installation of Rokeby that I would like to mention is “*Dark Matter*” (2010, revised 2015). The darkened gallery space is dominated by an invisible sculpture of silent sound. Your body probes the space listening for the sculpture’s spatial form to be expressed through the sounds of your contact with its immaterial presence.

Four infrared-sensitive video cameras surveil the dimly lit gallery from different angles, dividing the area into numerous three-dimensional zones. Specific zones have been allocated distinct sound attributes. Together, these interactive zones collectively form a sophisticated yet imperceptible presence within the gallery’s confines.

A computer system cross-references the camera data to identify zones exhibiting the most activity at any given time. These active zones trigger corresponding sounds – such as the noises of ice breaking, glass shattering, metallic creaks, falling rocks, or bursts of flames – emanating through an 8-channel sound system. The spatial distribution of these sounds corresponds to the physical stimuli’s locations in the space.

These sounds are inherently tactile and physical in nature. They were meticulously placed within the space by the artist, akin to painting with sound. Starting with an empty canvas, the artist manually positioned each sound within a specific cubic volume of space by hand gestures, creating an interactive sculpture of sound in the gallery space. In my immersive installation “*Alien Space: The Pantheon of New Gods*” (2008) I delve into the concept of mythology as an ever-evolving narrative that reflects the cultural, social, and technological advancements of our time. By drawing inspiration from science fiction, popular culture, and the collective imagination, this installation creates a new mythological framework that celebrates the fusion of ancient archetypes with modern-day icons.

Within the installation, a series of video projections present a diverse array of characters and entities, including aliens, robots, and TV speakers. These figures represent the pantheon of new gods, embodying the complexities and aspirations of our contemporary society. Each deity symbolizes different aspects of our collective consciousness,

offering a reflection of our desires, fears, and hopes in the face of advancing technology and the exploration of outer space.

"Alien Space" invites viewers to immerse themselves in a mythical realm where these new gods reside. Through the combination of visual elements and accompanying soundscapes, the installation creates an atmosphere that evokes a sense of awe and reverence. As visitors navigate the space, they encounter different video narratives, each depicting the stories and attributes of these divine beings. (<https://alexdementieva.org>)



@Sacha Georg, Alexandra Dementieva 'Alien Space'

Nomadology's celebration of multiplicity aligns seamlessly with the diverse narratives presented in new media art. Artists draw from a plethora of influences, technologies, and cultural references, creating multi-layered, non-linear artworks. Interactive storytelling and multimedia experiences encourage viewers to explore these multiplicitous narratives.

Lynn Hershman Leeson (<https://www.lynnhershman.com>) – Her interactive installation "Agent Ruby" (1998-2002) incorporates AI and interactivity, allowing viewers to engage in conversations with a virtual character exploring themes of identity and technology. Digital art often explores virtual spaces, inviting viewers on a nomadic journey within immersive environments. With the advent of VR and AR, viewers can embark on dynamic, ever-changing explorations. Nomadology's emphasis on movement and exploration finds expression in the fluidity of these virtual experiences.

'Last Whispers' Installation (immersive version, VR 2022) by **Lena Herzog**. It stands as an immersive project researching into the profound cultural loss of languages. It serves as an evocative homage to extinct and endangered languages, a harmonious

blend of contemporary and traditional choral elements. The intricate sound composition intricately layers various linguistic expressions - speech, recitations, incantations, songs, and ritual chants - interwoven with natural sounds and extraterrestrial frequencies, such as gravitational waves from dying stars captured by LIGO, the 'Listening Ear.'

This impactful experience is accentuated by cutting-edge image, sound design, and technological innovation. The audience is transported into landscapes and symbols devoid of human presence, while distant human voices echo from cosmic depths.

The immersive sound projection envelops the space, creating a distinct 360° auditory landscape. This fusion of visuals and sound triggers a perception where the voices within the piece are vividly felt as 'present' and remarkably 'real' to the human ear. (<https://www.lenaherzog.com>)

'Chalkroom' is a virtual reality work by **Laurie Anderson** and **Hsin-Chien Huang** in which the reader flies through an enormous structure made of words, drawings and stories. Once you enter you are free to roam and fly. Words sail through the air as emails. They fall into dust. They form and reform.

This VR experience allows participants to navigate through an expansive virtual environment made of drawings that resemble chalk drawings in a three-dimensional space.

In "Chalkroom," users wear VR headsets to explore a surreal and ever-evolving world composed of abstract, animated chalk drawings floating in a dark space. Participants can interact with the environment by moving around and touching or interacting with elements within the virtual space. (<https://laurieanderson.com>)

Another area that is appearing more and more in the arts is related to scientific research. Art & Science's mission is to offer a different way of thinking about the world. It about attempts to overcome anthropocentrism and consider the various living and nonliving entities around us – viruses and bodies, algorithms and technical devices, crystals and electric fields – as agents interacting with each other in a single process.

Artists and scientists collaborate to combine artistic creativity with scientific methodologies. These collaborations result in projects that bridge the gap between disciplines, fostering new insights and understandings.

Artists often use their works to communicate complex scientific concepts to broader audiences. Through visual representations, performances, installations, and other artistic mediums, they make scientific information more accessible and engaging.

The amalgamation of art and science encourages contemplation and critical reflection on the ethical, social, and philosophical implications of scientific advancements and technological progress. It contribute to educational initiatives that integrate artistic practices into scientific learning and vice versa. This fosters a holistic approach to education, encouraging interdisciplinary learning and creativity.

I would like to quote Dmitri Bulatov (artist, curator, art theorist): "Today, the public generally knows very little about what is happening in science and technology and what opportunities have opened up for the scientific world. Our body has become an object of

programming; it can be changed, recoded or supplemented with foreign elements. Such dependence on technology is associated in the minds of many people with disaster. If only because from the position of the same “everyday” consciousness, technoscience brings a systemic novelty that is incompatible with the realities of yesterday. And the only way to restore people’s sense of involvement in the changes taking place is to develop an imagination that is capable of simulating technologies that are moving away. It is as such models that works of art made using the latest technologies appear. With these metaphors, artistic statements that tell us about a person’s desire to master unknown phenomena, the clarification of knowledge usually begins.”

Dmitry Bulatov and Alexey Chebykin Project “*The Dancing Forest*” is a study exploring the relationship between two types of non-human agents. The first agent is a section of coniferous forest located at the 37th kilometer of the Curonian Spit National Park (Kaliningrad region, Russia). The peculiarity of this area is the inclined and curved trunks of the pine trees growing there. Trees of this shape are not found throughout the park, but only in a specific part of it. Experts call one of the possible reasons for this anomaly the peculiarities of local geomagnetic fields - the magnetic forces of the Earth, which are present everywhere and influence everything, although they are practically not felt by humans.

These magnetic forces embody the second participant in an imaginary metaphysical dance. As part of the study, the artists made a map of the geomagnetic activity of this zone of the national park and made devices with which they visualized the electrical activity of trees and the geomagnetic activity of this area of the forest. The Dancing Forest project is an interaction of data streams that, in addition to the non-human entities themselves, also reflect the relationships that exist between them. (<https://elmcip.net/person/dmitry-bulatov>)



@Dmitry Bulatov and Alexey Chebykin Project “*The Dancing Forest*”

The installation, titled “*Delay Lines*” (feedback) (2019) by **Melissa Dubbin & Aaron S. Davidson**, presents a silicone manta ray moving within an artificial aquatic setting. A computational device enables the manta’s movements to influence and respond to the surrounding environment. This interplay is depicted in the BioRob lab’s simulation, utilizing numerical models to compute interaction forces between virtual fluid particles, producing a video visualization of the fluid dynamics around the robotic body.

The manta ray model was initially constructed by Shuichi Wakimoto’s team at Okayama University and was later updated using a newer actuator developed by Wakimoto and the artists. The installation explores the interplay between the physical movements of the manta and the resulting simulation of fluid dynamics.

Dubbin and Davidson named the installation “*Delay Lines, (feedback)*” to represent the concept of delay in signal reception and to visualize time. They manipulated the simulation data from the BioRob lab to create unique relationships, linking the computer’s temperature to visual behaviors and the manta’s movement to navigation through the simulation.

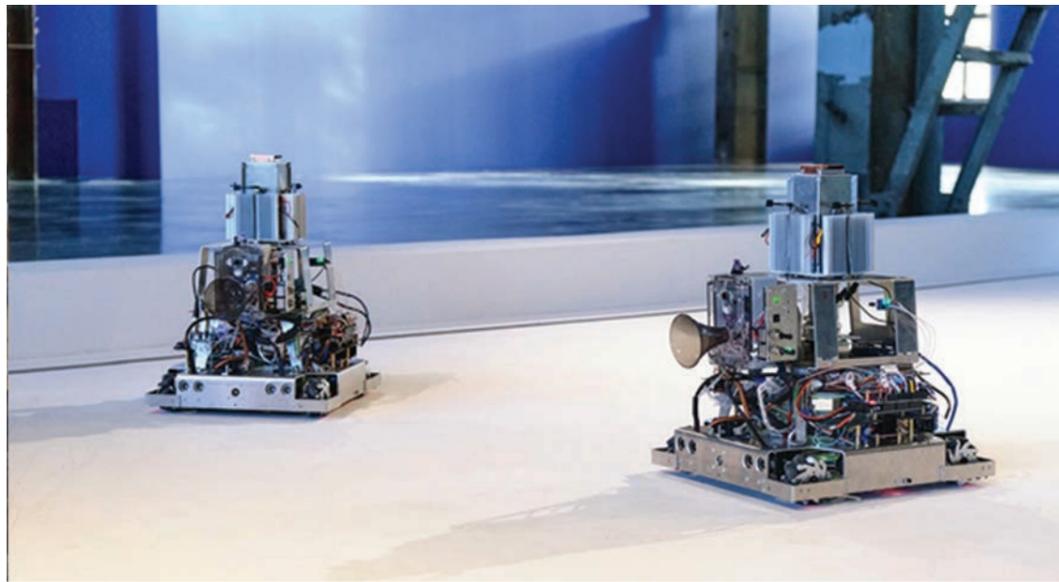
The collaboration aimed to merge scientific research with artistic creation, highlighting the scientific potential of fluid simulations for robot development while exploring the artistic aspects of the manta’s movements and the resulting fluid dynamics. (<https://www.dubbin-davidson.com>)

The group ‘Where dogs run’ (Participants: Natalia Grekhova, Alexey Korzukhin, Olga Inozemtseva, Vladislav Bulatov).

I would like to tell about their work ‘*Kerosene chronicle. Fungus*’ (2021). Kerosene Fungus, thriving in fuel tanks and nourishing itself on kerosene and diesel, poses severe risks. Its unchecked growth can cause aircraft malfunctions and damage oil infrastructure. The Ascomycetae *Amorphotheca resinae* Parbery (1969), a prevalent fuel-consuming fungus, coexists with humanity’s technological progress. Its evolutionary strategy capitalizes on the Anthropocene’s consequences.

This fungus alters the fuel’s smell during its metabolic processes, inspiring artists to model chemical interactions between fungus and machines. They designed robots with kerosene tanks containing this fungus, impacting their behavior based on tank data (PH levels, gas analysis, kerosene levels). The robots adopt different strategies like kerosene preservation, active hunting, exploration, altruism, or waiting for changes. Their interactions mirror social behaviors, evolving unpredictably due to strategy alignments. These fungus-machines navigate by scent, chaotically moving to locate higher kerosene concentrations. When robots with matching strategies encounter, they might merge to exchange kerosene, potentially igniting a fuel burner to charge a heat generator atop the fungus-machine. This complexity complicates group communication, resembling social interaction in action.

Developing communication between bio- and cyberorganisms is vital. Olfaction, the last sensory system holding an edge over artificial ones, could be our evolutionary advantage. Establishing connections between living and non-living entities through scent remains a potential pathway for interaction. (<https://wheredogsrun.art>)



@Where dogs run, 'Kerosine chronicle. Fungus'

Galina Bleikh "Perelmania: The Topology of the Bagel" (2020)

The project pays tribute to mathematician Grigori Perelman and his discoveries in geometric topology, particularly the torus ("bagel"). The project involves creating a series of images using a public domain photograph of Perelman, wherein multiple 3D models of "bagels" are wrapped with a tiled map of his photograph. This "Perelman topology" symbolizes the infinite multidimensionality of the world, merging the mathematician and his discoveries into a singular representation.



@Galina Bleikh 'Perelmania: The Topology of the Bagel'

The artist explores the vast visual possibilities and unexpected outcomes, considering the computer as a co-creator in their artistic process. This collaboration between human and machine defines their art as a "hybrid" form, resulting from the partnership between the artist and the computer in modern computer reality. (<https://www.bleikh.art>)

The practice of all of the above artists lies primarily in the field of technological art and uses a wide range of multimedia: video, robotics, hybrid installations, performances and DIV packages. They combine innovative visual techniques with scientific research tools and low-tech aesthetics. Through technological processes, artists explore how the mythological and the everyday intertwine with each other, and explore possible mechanisms that could enable new forms of human interaction with different forms of reality.

To summarize, the philosophy of Nomadology and the world of new media, art and science converge in a symbiotic relationship defined by variability, interactivity, multiplicity, encouraging innovation and new perspectives by crossing disciplinary boundaries. Works of art travel around the world physically and virtually, arousing the interest of the general public and offering answers or questions to pressing problems of our time.

In the future, the connection between art and science will only strengthen. This means that our strategies will have to become more complex and our models of the world around us will have to become more flexible.

NOMADIC VISIONS: EXPLORING MONGOLIAN HISTORICAL TO URBAN NOMADISM SHIFT

Solongo Tseekhuu
(Artist, curator, researcher, Mongolia)

At the heart of Central Asia, Mongolia stands as a land in transition, its vast landscapes and rich cultural heritage bearing witness to the profound impact of urbanization on its traditional nomadic way of life. The nation's economic growth, fueled by mining and cashmere production, has brought prosperity to some, but it has also come at a cost – a cost that is reshaping Mongolia's countryside and challenging the very essence of its nomadic traditions, art and culture.

The Nomadic Legacy and the Rise of Urban Nomadism

Mongolia's history is deeply entwined with nomadism. For centuries, herders have traversed the boundless steppes, their lives guided by the rhythms of nature and the needs of their herds. This nomadic spirit, characterized by resilience, adaptability, and a profound connection to the land, has shaped the nation's cultural identity and artistic expressions.



Traditional Mongolian ger (yurt) photography by Amarbat Oyunbileg

However, the allure of modern life has drawn many Mongolians away from the steppes, towards the burgeoning cities. The capital, Ulaanbaatar, has seen a rapid influx of people seeking opportunities, education, and the conveniences of urban living. This migration has given rise to a unique phenomenon – the proliferation of gers, traditional Mongolian yurts, in makeshift districts within the city.



"Ger district"

These ger districts serve as a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by those navigating the transition between nomadic heritage and urban aspirations. While the city offers the promise of a better life, many find themselves struggling with homelessness, poverty, and cultural displacement.

Art as a Mirror of Transformation

Mongolia's artistic landscape reflects the profound transformations brought about by urbanization. Contemporary artists grapple with the complexities of this transition, creating works that explore the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, the open steppes and the concrete jungle. Paintings depict the jarring juxtaposition of yurts against skyscrapers, highlighting the clash of old and new. Sculptures fuse traditional motifs with contemporary forms, symbolizing the merging of nomadic heritage with urban influences. Through these artistic expressions, Mongolian artists strive to capture the essence of urban nomadism, a phenomenon that embodies the resilience and adaptability of the Mongolian spirit in the face of rapid change.

The Enduring Spirit of Nomadism

Despite the challenges posed by urbanization, the nomadic spirit remains deeply embedded in Mongolian culture. The traditional values of resilience, adaptability, and a

harmonious relationship with nature continue to inform contemporary art, music, and literature. Artists draw inspiration from the vast landscapes of the steppes, infusing their work with a sense of freedom and connection to the land. Traditional motifs and techniques are reinterpreted in modern contexts, creating a unique artistic language that bridges the gap between past and present.



"Landscape" and "Seasons" by Solongo Tseekhuu 2023

In this dynamic interplay between historical nomadism and the emergence of urban nomadism, Mongolian art serves as a living testimony to the enduring spirit of a culture in transition. It is an art that reflects the resilience, adaptability, and timeless beauty of nomadic traditions, even as they adapt to the ever-changing landscapes of the modern world.

The Impact of Urbanization on Nomadic Communities

The transition from a nomadic lifestyle to an urban one has had a profound impact on Mongolian communities. While some have benefited from the economic opportunities and social services offered by cities, others have struggled to adapt to the challenges of urban life. The loss of traditional livelihoods, the disruption of social networks, and the alienation from the natural environment have all taken a toll on nomadic communities. In some cases, this has led to increased poverty, alcoholism, and domestic violence.

Nomadic Culture in the Face of Modernization

Despite these challenges, nomadic culture remains an integral part of Mongolian identity. Many Mongolians, even those who live in cities, retain a deep connection to their nomadic heritage. This connection is evident in their language, their food, their music, and their art. Nomadic culture is also being revitalized by a new generation of



The engagement ceremony held in a modern house in the far southern countryside illustrates a fascinating blend of nomadic and urban life. Photo by Amarbat Oyunbileg

Mongolians who are rediscovering their roots and embracing their nomadic heritage. These young Mongolians are working to preserve traditional knowledge and practices, and they are also creating new forms of art and expression that reflect their nomadic identity.

The Future of Nomadic Culture in Mongolia

The future of nomadic culture in Mongolia is uncertain. The pressures of urbanization and globalization continue to threaten traditional ways of life. However, there is also a growing movement to preserve and revitalize nomadic culture. Ultimately, the fate of nomadic culture in Mongolia will depend on the choices that Mongolians make about their future. Will they choose to embrace their nomadic heritage and preserve their traditional way of life? Or will they succumb to the pressures of modernity and abandon their nomadic roots?

Conclusion

Mongolia is a land in transition, its nomadic past giving way to an urban future. The challenges facing nomadic communities in the face of urbanization are significant, but there is also a growing movement to preserve and revitalize nomadic culture. Ultimately, the fate of nomadic culture in Mongolia will depend on the choices that Mongolians make

about their future. Will they choose to embrace their nomadic heritage and preserve their traditional way of life? Or will they succumb to the pressures of modernity and abandon their nomadic roots?

Artistic expressions in Mongolia act as a bridge between the historical nomadic past and the evolving urban present. Through various mediums, artists reflect on the collective memory of nomadism, infusing it with the complexities of contemporary urban life. The nomadic landscape, once confined to the steppes, now expands to include the urban sprawl, encapsulating the nomadic spirit within the modern context. Moreover, the nomadic ethos permeates not only the subject matter of the art but also the artistic process itself. Artists, like nomads of old, wander through the vast landscapes of their imagination, drawing inspiration from both the historical and urban realms. The nomadic approach to artmaking involves a constant exploration, a journey that mirrors the nomadic spirit's ceaseless quest for new horizons. Mongolian art serves as a vibrant tapestry that weaves together the threads of historical nomadism and the emergence of urban nomadism. Through paintings, sculptures, and other mediums, artists navigate the shifting landscapes of tradition and modernity, creating a visual dialogue that transcends temporal and spatial boundaries. As Mongolia continues to evolve, its art remains a testament to the enduring spirit of nomadism, whether manifested across the sweeping steppes or within the bustling urban centers. In this dynamic interplay, Mongolian art becomes a living testimony to the resilience, adaptability, and timeless beauty of nomadic culture.

The future of Mongolia is uncertain, but one thing is sure: the nomadic spirit will continue to shape the nation's identity, art, and culture for generations to come.



Choices are hers. Photo by Amarbat Oyunbileg

DIASPORA ART AND NOMADS IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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"I meditate every day, closing my eyes, feeling my breath and focusing on my body and mind. And I start working with internal motivation and inspiration. If you sit down properly with your eyes closed and stop quietly, the sense of materials disappears as if the world is a wave and the body is floating in a vacuum like being in deep water. I become free from what is socially defined as 'I' and I am united with my breath. At that moment, my consciousness is connected to the whole. If I open my eyes, feel my breath, and move my body after the meditation, I can give expression, being divinely connected with the whole. In this respect, I am a contemporary shaman."

There is an artist like a nomad who wanders in certain times and places to do site-specific performances. I am that kind of artist. In particular, I have looked for the places where genocide occurred, and everything lay in ruins due to war, ideological conflict or state violence. In these places, I burn incense, make a painting, and do a gesture performance. Also, I make a sand animation which is drawn with light and shadow of sand. The sand animation can be a duplicable digital video artwork by filming and editing its drawing process. I will show my sand animation video artwork in this year's exhibition. I made this artwork when there was a big crisis due to flood during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. I expressed that there is not the divinity in large churches, but it is with refugees and poor people outside.



Hong Joo, 'There is Jesus outside the church', Sand animation, 2020

1. Diaspora and Nomads

Do you know the Korean Diaspora? It means the Korean people who left their homeland, namely the Korean Peninsula, and live in other countries. In other words, the Korean Diaspora is not immigrants or short-term residents who want to leave their homeland

for purposes such as studying abroad, but the people and their descendants who had to leave their homeland during the Japanese colonial rule in Korea due to World War II. According to the book for Korean Diaspora researchers "Power of Collective Intelligence to Overcome National Division (Seungho Lee et al., 2018)", the number of the Korean Diaspora is estimated to be 7 million to 7.5 million and most of them have lived in East Asia. Currently, there live about 2 million in China called 'Korean Chinese', about 0.5 million in Central Asia called 'Korean Russian', and about 0.8 million in Japan called 'Korean Japanese' or 'Zainichi'. Looking at these statistics, the ratio of the diaspora to residents of the home country is about 10%, which is the second largest in the world after Jews. This is because of the specificity of the history of the Korean Peninsula in the early 20th century.

After Japan was defeated by the power of US nuclear weapons in 1945, war broke out between Korean people in the Korean Peninsula for 3 years beginning on 25 June 1950 because of different ideologies. Korea was divided into the South and the North and is still in a truce. South Koreans cannot go to Europe by land because the truce line has blocked the way. It takes an hour by car from South Korea to North Korea. It has been more than 70 years since some people must live without meeting their families who were separated due to the truce. South Korea has run towards economic development, not solving the unfortunate history of national division. Korean Japanese, who remained in Japan during the Japanese colonial rule, and Korean Russian, who were forced to move to East Asia by Stalin of the Soviet Union, kept their native language and tradition. The first and second generations have now passed, and the third generation has come. Diaspora, the feeling of being connected although they live separately may be an archetype inherent in the unconscious.

The exhibition by a Korean Japanese diaspora artist "Kim, Yongsuk – Life and Reunion After Life" is held from 28 July to 29 October 2023 at Ha Jung-wong Museum of Art, Gwangju Museum of Art, Gwangju, South Korea.

Yongsuk Kim is a third-generation Korean Japanese diaspora artist. She questions the 'border', travelling to Portugal, Europe, etc. She always has to live the life of diaspora on the border. She has fundamental understanding of life through travel and expresses it in her paintings.



Yongsuk Kim, *I have wings*, 116.7 x 116.7 cm, Oil on canvas, 2006



Yongsuk Kim
Chohyeon-Listen to the wind, 162.2 x 112.1 cm
Oil on canvas, 2012



Yongsuk Kim
Chohyeon-From today to tomorrow, 162.2 x 224 cm
Oil on canvas, 2012.

Korea is her country, but Japan is also her country as she was born in Japan. She has lived as a Korean Japanese. She travelled asking questions about existence, discovered the time, space and divinity, and made artworks. If we look at the fate of diaspora from the perspective of a "Earth Traveler", life is a journey from birth to death. This is the same with nomad spirit.

In this way, artists draw the moment of existence which stayed in a certain time and place from a traveler's point of view, do site-specific performances, or work with questions about existence. Also, duplicable artworks are made as NFTs in the Metaverse. All these cross the border. In this regard, it is the same with nomad spirit. And the artists ask a common question: "Who am I?"

2. Digital Nomads

Humans have rapidly moved into the era of duplication. For humans in the 21st century, the concepts of originality and creation already transformed into the meaning of selecting and editing autonomous information. In the era of Internet hyperconnected duplication, we are inevitably digital nomads. Based on the Internet access, we process information without space constraints by using smartphones or laptops. The identity 'I' is living as another 'I' with my avatar and address in digital virtual spaces. Capital is eager to find the way to have or give values in the era of unlimited duplicable technology, where scarcity has disappeared. We are artists living in this era of duplication. What is art in the era of digital nomads and in a flood of duplicated images and information? How can we express and communicate or empathize with the world? I think that communication and empathy are important with the question "Who am I?" in art.

Human history was the history of power realignment to draw the line named "border" and occupy spaces. Inevitably, the problems of power, possession and space occupation

which cause dispute remain. Human history in which conflict or war happen as external 'immigrants' enter the place of 'inhabitant' and occupy it is still in progress. In other words, humans still occupy spaces with their bodies and there are still borders. However, because of technology development, the world of digital nomads where anyone can cross the border with duplicated information has opened. The world is made and connected with imagination created by the information in our brains.

Digital nomads in the 21st century have rapidly reorganized human space based on advanced communication technology. They meet, communicate, create, and trade



Reference: <https://www.gettyimagesbank.com>

something by making virtual spaces, not existing spaces. While traditional nomads inevitably have conflict or war to occupy real spaces, digital nomads make values in virtual spaces, that is to say another world.

In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic made the digital era accelerated. We can study without going to school by moving our bodies, work without going to work or with living abroad, and communicate as much as we want without meeting in person. It is making a concept of space which we have never experienced before, in a surreal way of communication through the virtual space "Metaverse". The virtual space can be bought or sold, and duplicated images can be virtual currencies as NFTs for trade. This is a new way of creating value. The advent of AI 'ChatGPT' preannounces a new paradigm shift in creation.

Digital nomads do not mean artists only. The representative nomads in the analogue era are Jim Rogers who is the global investor and Namjune Paik who was the artist to

connect the world by using colour televisions. We are already connected by technology and have entered the era of self-duplication through AI. Now humans must gain new identity.

The characteristic of a new human is that they are a new form of contemporary nomad to move from space to space in cyberspace. Therefore, the emergence of digital nomads needs to be examined in terms of instrumentalism. It is because their nomadic life is based on digital equipment in the online environment, rather than horses in a Mongolian field. In other words, digital nomads and new media are subjects and tools to organize the new environment called "digital". New media is a main means of communication and has ontological specificity different from pre-digital technological images.

The biggest change in communication in the digital era is the central shift from text-based communication to image-based communication. And digital images have several ontological specificities: 'loss of original concepts', 'practically functioning fictitious things(e.g. NFTs)', 'the possibility of infinite duplication', 'temporality and one-off', etc. Content and entertainment which digital nomads make and consume tend to be temporary and one-off. It may be because of the ontological specificity of digital which exists fictitiously in the virtual world or online digital communication environment. It is good to create a great deal of new content in the digital video era, but it has a short life. This makes us think "Does art really have to leave something behind?" in terms of the fact that "life is short, and art is long." It will continue to be an important question for artists how they empathize or communicate in the ever-changing environment of new communication.