

# **collapse: data.models.worlds.**

Group Exhibition

**VEKTOR**  
ATHENS



# **collapse: data.models.worlds**

## **ARTISTS**

Niki Danai Chania

Bethan Hughes

Vladan Joler/ Gordan Savičić/ Felix Stalder

Athina Koumparouli

Latent Community

Maria Mavropoulou

Juan Obando

Salvatore Vitale

## **CURATED BY**

Daphne Dragona & Katerina Gkoutziouli

## **GROUP EXHIBITION**

March 5 – April 2, 2026

Saigon: 39 Korytsas, 10447, Votanikos, Athens

## **ORGANISED BY**

VEKTOR Athens



## **collapse: data.models.worlds.**

The exhibition *collapse: data.models.worlds.* addresses the intensifying state of crisis shaping the contemporary world, examining the role of technology within it. Drawing on current debates around the possibilities and limitations of technological infrastructures, it explores their entanglement with social and ecological issues, from the past to the present.

Technology -and in particular the increasing deployment of artificial intelligence- promises solutions that are inextricably linked to mechanisms of exploitation of human and natural resources. Popular computational models, for instance, process vast volumes of data that rely on invisible human labor, intensive energy consumption, and the extraction of raw materials. Geopolitical claims and shifts in land use are closely tied to the demands of technological development, often perpetuating colonial strategies of the past. At the same time, algorithmically generated images and news contribute to a state of ambiguity and uncertainty. Today's persistent technological, social, and environmental problems are not isolated; they are interconnected and recurrent. Terms such as polycrisis, permacrisis, and meta-crisis, which have gained prominence in recent years, reflect the difficulty of managing interrelated challenges, as well as their persistence and escalation.

The exhibition *collapse: data.models.worlds.* discusses the current condition in relation to the collapse of established models of thought, and the shift towards new forms of coexistence, knowledge and responsibility. Focusing on the intersections of technology, environment and history, the artistic works presented, propose readings of the current complex reality through different examples. Stories of technological control and extractive practices are linked to specific places and communities. References to myths, lived experiences and projections into the future recall the interdependent relationships between the human and non-human worlds. Mappings and visualizations bring together data feedback loops and cycles of matter. By utilizing different media and materials, the works create the ground for a discussion around the restoration and preservation of social and environmental balance.

**Niki Danai Chania, *The Nymph (Fragment of)*, 2026**

Ceramics, 185 x 130 x 3 cm

'I learned to live without water before I learned how to walk on land. What survives of me leaks, hardens, shines.'

Niki Danai Chania merges sculpture with textual and visual narratives to explore sociopolitical and psychological themes. Blending personal experiences, encounters, and dreams with mythology, folklore, and pop culture, she addresses forms of injustice, despair, and oppression.

The *Nymph (Fragment of)* is inspired by a semi-fictional story, under the same name, following a water nymph forced to abandon her underwater home for an Athens, hit by the crisis. Her world has been destroyed by industrial violence; the only possibilities left are adaptation, displacement, and fragmented transformation for both bodies and myths. Cut between human and animal, natural and mythical matter, the nymph is an entity, without past or future. The sculpture incorporates fragmented monstrous forms, sea creatures, hybrid plants, and mythological symbols, as a silvered layer spreads, evoking water or tears. For Chania, memory, desire and pain depicted in myths can be traced in today's fractured urban reality.

**Bethan Hughes, *An Elastic Continuum VI*, 2025**

Silver gelatin print, stainless steel, 30 x 40 cm

***An Outfit for a Woman in a Field II*, 2025**

Latex, stainless steel, dimensions variable

Bethan Hughes' installations, sculptures and publications interweave archival research and speculative narratives to explore the unnatural ecologies generated through industry, commerce and technology.

The works *An Elastic Continuum VI* and *Outfit for a Woman in the Field II*, expand on the artist's long-term research into the primary natural sources of rubber, including the plant *Taraxacum koksaghyz* (Russian dandelion). Nowadays, rubber is everywhere, yet mostly in the background –coating, insulating, protecting, and mediating; gloves, coats, tires, cables are only some of the innumerable cases where it is used as material.

Hughes follows the journey of the humble “weed” involving processes of cultivation, harvest and latex extraction, from the Tien Shan mountains in Kazakhstan to collective farms across the former Soviet Union, greenhouses at Auschwitz to the laboratories of multinational tire corporations in Europe. The project explores the entanglements between people, plants, politics and power, and particularly traces the biographies of the flower and the many –often unnamed– women whose lives became deeply interwoven with it and whose stories were never told.

**Vladan Joler/ Gordan Savičić/ Felix Stalder,**  
***Infrastructure of a Migratory Bird, v2.0, 2025***  
Print on Alu-dibond, 220 x 180 cm. Video, sound, 2'55''

Artists and academics Vladan Joler, Gordan Savičić, Felix Stalder, working on the intersection of technology, society and culture joined forces for the mapping of the *Infrastructure of a Migratory Bird*, a project with the goal of enabling wilderness in the Anthropocene.

The Northern Bald Ibis (Waldrapp) is a migratory bird with a historic habitat in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa and a rich cultural history dating back to ancient Egypt. It became extinct in Europe around 1621, and in 2013 a project led by Johannes Fritz began for its rewilding. As part of it, birds are equipped with GPS trackers and are monitored in real-time. At least 357 birds are necessary for the population to be self-sustainable, and this number is projected to be reached by 2028. This map represents the extent of the infrastructure in the early 2020s.

The diagram consists of a relational graph and three scales. The graph shows relationships between social, technological, informational and ecological elements which make up the anthropogenic ecosystem in which the bird is becoming wild again. The scales show the spatial, monetary and temporal dimensions of the elements that make up the relational graph. The audiovisual tour of the map offers a guided narrative and a performative reading of the visual knowledge.

**Athina Koumparouli, *Strata of Cloud to Ground*, 2026**

LCD screens, 320 x 90 cm

Athina Koumparouli applies methodologies from archaeological excavation and antiquity restoration to build multilayered narratives of societies undergoing transitions. Her investigation focuses on the peculiar dependencies, conflicts, and balances emerging between natural and artificial organisms in the context of an ecological imbalance.

*Strata of Cloud to Ground* approaches fragments of screens as future debris. Screens are the primary interface of the digital world; they hold their own technologies, materialities and temporalities. LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays) are grid-like structures, consisting of layers that regulate, filter and block light. Their manufacturing requires rare earth materials, metals, minerals and high energy consumption while their lifespan is limited due to irreparability or a planned obsolescence.

Athina Koumparouli uses fragments of broken LCD layers made of plastic, glass, metal or other materials. Cracked, inactive, and discarded, these fragments resemble archaeological findings. They become objects to be looked at, pointing toward tomorrow's electronic waste and polluted legacy.

## **Latent Community, *Dark Source: Cloud Extraction*, 2026**

Single channel video, stereo sound, 8'20"

Latent Community works with moving image, sound, photography, and textile, addressing questions of social, political, and ecological justice. Informed by Mediterranean contexts, their work renders overlooked histories, amplifies counter-narratives, and examines vulnerable ecosystems.

*Cloud Extraction* marks the first iteration of *Dark Source*, an ongoing critical research project on extractivism. The research takes place in the lignite villages of Western Macedonia, focusing on the social and ecological impacts of lignite extractive practices, the desertification of the region, and their long-term consequences on the landscape and local communities. The narrative emerges from local testimonies and environmental stories, taking shape through the coexistence of visual documentation and speculative narration.

The work approaches extraction not as a closed historical chapter but as an ongoing process of transformation: the ground remains an active site of exploitation, while technology emerges as the new extractive tool of the data age. *Dark Source* seeks to reveal the invisible continuities between material and immaterial extraction, raising questions about the relationship between humans, technology, and the environment.

This work was commissioned by VEKTOR Athens and Error 417 Expectation Failed.

**Maria Mavropoulou, *Ecologies of Noise*, 2026**

Digital print, 100 x 500 cm

Maria Mavropoulou works across photography, AI-generated imagery, screen-based works, and research-driven installations. She is particularly interested in algorithmic bias, model collapse, and the gradual erosion of meaning in synthetic visual culture.

*Ecologies of Noise* draws on the phenomenon of model collapse and its connection to forms of cultural and environmental exhaustion. This phenomenon refers to the degenerative process occurring when machine learning models are trained on AI-generated content.

For this work, Mavropoulou has used a custom coded program that engages the system in an endless loop. The artist uses as input images depicting the climate crisis, found under creative commons license. The image-to-image program produces an output that Mavropoulou feeds back to the system as the next input which leads to the gradual degradation of the generated images. The frames, resembling the aesthetics of modern abstraction, are appropriated by the artist to point to the costs of machinic creativity, involving both the depletion of resources and an increasing cultural flattening.

## **Juan Obando, *They/Them*, 2023**

Video, color, sound, duration: 9'41”

Juan Obando creates video-performances, post-digital objects and screen-based installations —presenting the screen as a site where ideology confronts aesthetics and new worlds are speculated.

*They/Them* is a video essay in which Juan Obando uses Adobe Stock video clips of protests. Maintaining their logo watermark, the artist has animated the scenes and the characters depicted within them. Using voice-cloning technology and an image processing framework, Obando has cast a variety of artificial voices for them and animated their mouths and facial expressions. The characters recite a script written by the artist, pondering how stock imagery has increasingly become the visual lexicon of our contemporary "shared realities". These highly-produced stock videos require direction, makeup, actors, specific settings, props, and lighting. They are used in advertisements, but might also appear in the news or be used for documentary purposes. What does this mean for contemporary activism?

Through fictive storytelling, *They/Them* reveals the role of mass-produced adversarial propaganda in shaping perceptions of reality within global media ecosystems.

## **Salvatore Vitale, *Death By GPS*, 2023-2026**

3-channel video, color, sound, 3'40"

Inkjet print, 90 x 120 cm

Salvatore Vitale explores the systems shaping contemporary life. Through speculative storytelling, he investigates how technology and power structures influence societies, focusing on the political, social, and visual dimensions.

The works presented here are part of *Death by GPS*, a project that explores how automation technologies reshape labour, revealing the contradictions of digital capitalism. The project questions the promises of technological progress based on concealing the extractive practices, rooted in inequality and post-colonial exploitation. Drawing on current conditions of digital labour in post-apartheid South Africa, Vitale highlights both the vulnerability and resilience of digital workers. Human labour, though increasingly hidden, remains central to automated economies.

The 3-channel video installation depicts the destruction of office equipment as a symbolic act of rebellion against the systems of algorithmic control. The photograph points to the connection between digital infrastructures and human exploitation, as well as to the possibilities for withdrawal. For Vitale, deliberate moments of cathartic rupture express frustration, mourning, and defiance, while reclaiming the right to pause, feel, and resist.



## **CREDITS**

Audiovisual Design: Makis Faros, Antonis Gkatzougiannis

Production Coordination: Iris Asimakopoulou

Communication: Maria Paktiti

Art Mediator: Elena Alevizou

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