



New Rituals [for the End of the World]

9.5.–9.8.2026

Opening: Friday, 8.5.2026, 19h

The Earth is burning. A genocide is being broadcast live. AI is worshipped like a god. Fascists are brandishing chainsaws. And Sam Altman cheerfully admits that his technology may well destroy the world – while Big Tech stands to profit from it. We are living through the apocalypse. Not metaphorically.

This exhibition looks at emerging social strategies for navigating an increasingly difficult global reality. Notably, new ritual practices are currently taking shape at the intersection of technology and spirituality. Bringing together an international group of artists, the exhibition presents works that imagine new rituals as coping mechanisms in response to the pervasive sense that the world is falling apart. The artists ask what kinds of symbolic actions might hold us together when the sky gives way. What new mythologies could help us survive and transform the end of the world as we know it?

Artists: Zach Blas, S()fia Braga, Stefanie Egedy, Sian Fan, Teresa Fernández-Pello, Anan Fries, Dorota Gawęda, Auriea Harvey, Maya Hottarek, Etsuko Ichihara, Eglé Kulbokaitė, Christiane Peschek, Skawenna-ti, Robin Meier Wiratunga

Curators: Anan Fries und Marlene Wenger

The exhibition presents both explicit and implicit forms of new rituals and ritual practices. It opens with an altar dedicated to an AI deity nourished by human tears. With *576 Tears*, **Zach Blas** creates an embodiment of the religious elevation of AI practiced in Silicon Valley. Using augmented reality, visitors donate virtual tears to the deity *Lacrimae*, evoking a contemporary version of the lamentation of Christ, with tears that stand in for the harvested emotional labor of this technology's users. After this cathartic opening ritual, the exhibition moves toward questions surrounding our relationship to personal devices and our behavior on social platforms. Platform Workshopers by **S(j)fia Braga** presents a pointed typology of content creation, revealing how habits of posting, liking, scrolling, and lurking can evolve into dogmatic forms of dependency and strange content formats. GRWM, makeup tutorials, What I Eat in a Day: Braga's work traces the absurd everyday rituals performed on social media and frames them within the competitive economy of content labor and the monetization of attention.

In the black velvet gothic sculpture *Purgatorio*, **Anan Fries** invites visitors to submit their own smartphones to a cleansing of the technofascist energies that resonate through the platforms used on them. The ritual is intended not only to protect the device, but also the body that constantly carries and touches it from the ideas embedded within these systems. This intimate connection between body and device is also explored in **Sian Fan's** *Reconnection Charms*. These small objects sit comfortably in the hand and display simple mantras on a tiny screen. Much like the Tamagotchi once did, the charm playfully reminds its holder to care for their body-mind connection. In the video game *LURE*, another work by Fan, the artist reflects on growing up with hyperfeminine avatars that were often the only available option in male-dominated gaming worlds. The work raises the question of whether ritual practices might accompany us into the metaverse, and why even in science-fiction game worlds we struggle to move beyond patriarchal and capitalist structures. Skawennati's *TimeTraveller™* uses the virtual world of Second Life to imagine precisely such a shift. The protagonist is a time-traveling Mohawk headhunter who visits key historical events across nine episodes, allowing history to be experienced from a different perspective. Here, the speculative ritual of time travel ultimately leads to a hopeful future in which First Nations have regained strength and the apocalypse of colonization has been overcome.

Teresa Fernández-Pello's *The Heart of the Hurt* takes the form of a high-tech neo altarpiece. Installed directly on the back wall of Zach Blas's AI altar, it functions in some ways as both a counterpart and a complement. Drawing on the floor plan of a cathedral, the work repurposes the artist's personal data across several dismantled iPhone screens. The result is a self-portrait in the form of an altar that invites viewers to venerate the self rather than a new technological deity. Christian iconography also appears in **Auriea Harvey's** *Idol.App*. Inspired by the prophets of the Bible, the oracle produces prophecies whenever visitors use the custom keyboard. The work serves as a fitting analogy for today's black box of AI, which generates forms of wisdom people increasingly follow without knowing how they were produced or what intentions lie behind them.

Maya Hottarek's sound installation *Neokaryotes* addresses the senses rather than cognition. Clay sculptures suspended from the ceiling emit healing scents and sound frequencies that reconnect visitors with their own bodies and with the earth. Referencing the species that gives the work its title, the installation serves as a



the more humans stylized themselves to resemble machines.

into mechanical repetition.

The illusion of just sharing

suspended between two roles,



reminder of the shared ancestors of all living beings and of our evolutionary interconnectedness. Healing is also central to **Christiane Peschek's** installation *FEVER*. In this work, fever becomes a metaphor for global warming, translating a planetary crisis onto the scale of the human body. The proposed remedies are snake venom or a tarot reading, unconventional treatments that reflect the sensibilities of the present moment.

New interpretations of traditional rituals appear in works by **Etsuko Ichihara** and **Dorota Gawęda** and **Eglé Kulbokaitė**. In *Namahage in Tokyo*, Ichihara brings a figure from Japanese folklore into the present. According to tradition, the frightening monster Namahage appears on New Year's Eve to capture misbehaving children unless it is appeased with food and drink. Ichihara equips the creature with cameras and drones, translating the folklore into the format of a DIY splatter film. In their new video work *Spit and Image*, Dorota Gawęda and Eglé Kulbokaitė revisit the séance as a historical ritual form. In highly stylized, cinematic images, an injured protagonist consumes a ritual meal inside a mirrored chamber while scrolling through AI-generated images on her iPhone. The scene captures the prevailing sense of apocalyptic unease with striking clarity.

The exhibition concludes with an immersive sound installation by **Robin Meier Wiratunga** that invites a meditative encounter with the end of the universe. Shifting away from earthly concerns, the work expands toward a planetary and cosmic perspective where the existence of the human species takes on a far smaller significance.

As a special performance during Art Basel, visitors can experience **Stefanie Egedy's** sound installation *Sonic Energetics*. Its deep frequencies engage the body directly and calm the nervous system, creating a ritual that speaks an almost universal language through its minimalist and undogmatic directness

Catalogue: *New Rituals [for the End of the World]*, edited by Sabine Himmelsbach and Marlene Wenger for HEK (House of Electronic Arts), Christoph Merian Verlag, Basel, June 2026. English and German, approx. 192 pages, softcover, 17 × 28 cm. Design: Mean Goddess.

Contributors include Shumon Basar, Anan Fries, Jenny Stümer, Audrey Tang, Suzanne Treister, McKenzie Wark, Marlene Wenger, and Günseli Yalsinkaya.

The exhibition is supported by:

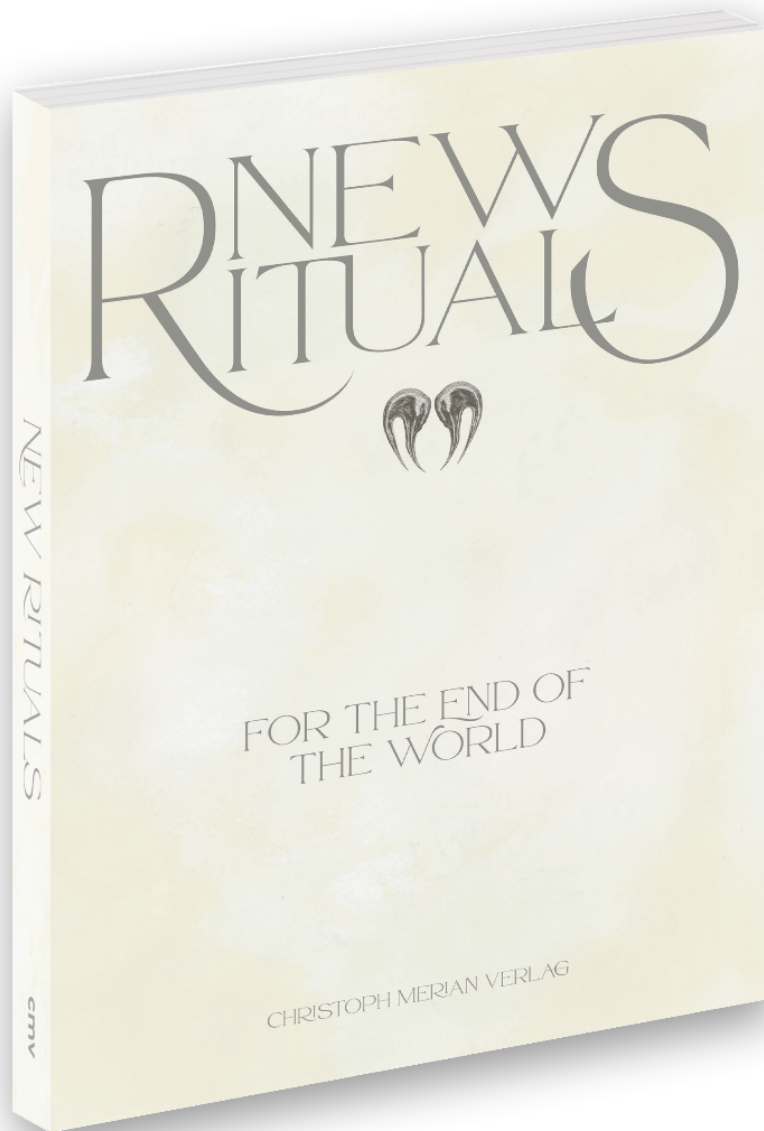
die Mobiliar

MIGROS
kulturprozent

LANDIS&GYR
STIFTUNG

HMSL
STIFTUNG

Sturzenegger-Stiftung
Schaffhausen



ISBN 978-3-03969-063-3

<https://www.merianverlag.ch/produkt/theaterbuehne/neue-rituale-fuer-das-ende-der-welt-new-rituals-for-the-end-of-the-world/ec04680a-a613-4258-81fa-339c1719e616.html>

