

# A CITY BEYOND

Rethinking  
Co-Habitation



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***A City Beyond*** promotes novel ways of looking at our urban environment with a focus on cooperation. The exhibition speculates on urban forms of collaboration between humans and non-humans by understanding these entities as dependent on each other and mutually beneficial. The concept was promoted by the biologist Lynn Margulis, who argued for a non-hierarchical understanding of evolution and the interactions between different organisms as symbiotic.

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With more than half of the world's population now living in urban environments, the city of tomorrow demands inclusion and mindfulness to survive. The effects of this growth extend beyond the limits of urban areas, contributing to a global climate crisis endangering all species alike. The landscapes that emerge from this exhibition are a combination of real and fictional narratives that intersect and feed each other through transdisciplinary exchanges, offering novel forms of coexistence.<sup>1</sup>

MARCH 15 –  
MAY 27, 2023

The works exhibited imagine the future cohabitation of this planet through sharing, collaboration, and interspecies communication. Mythology is used as a narrative tool for speculating on a possible future. Circular processes are translated into metamorphosing forms, which accept change as a life-process and foster resilience by accepting the technological sphere in which they are embedded.

The exhibition ***A City Beyond*** marks the start of the yearlong Cohabitations project, which explores the question of how human and more-than-human<sup>2</sup> species will want to live together in a hundred years' time.

<sup>1</sup> "Symbiosis" comes from the Greek words "sym-" meaning "together," and "-biosis" meaning "living." The term was first coined by Swiss botanist Simon Schwendener in 1877 to describe the relationship that constitutes lichens, which are composite organisms made up of a fungus and an alga or cyanobacterium living together in a mutually beneficial partnership.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of more-than-human stems from the work of various scholars, including anthropologists, ecologists, and philosophers. Notable contributors to the development of this concept include Donna J. Haraway, who coined the term "naturecultures" to describe the entanglement of human and non-human entities, and Bruno Latour, who emphasizes the agency of non-human actors in shaping our social and ecological systems.

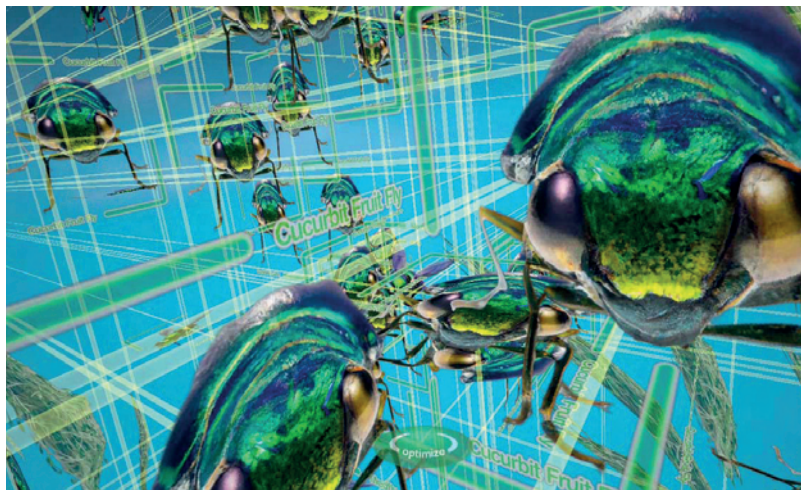
**CAON—Control and Optimize Nature, 2023**  
**Mobile app as interface for two-channel real-time processed interactive installation**

Imagining a speculative future in which technological solutionism has been taken to an extreme, CAON—Control and Optimize Nature explores the potential of advanced technologies in the management of future ecosystems. In a habitat where animal, fungi, and plant species have been modified by 3D printing, CRISPR, and synthetic biology, the viewer observes an artificial intelligence (AI) preventing the delicate ecosystem from collapsing. The audience is invited to fly with the created species, interacting with a smartphone through the perspective of an AI simulator, to optimize the living beings further, and observe the changing ecosystem.

These developments are not merely speculative, but are happening today. Research published by Evans et al. in 2019 shows that many offspring of genetically modified mosquitoes have survived and are spreading and propagating further. Where is our growing ability to manipulate life taking us? We tend to rely on technology-based solutions such as genetic engineering, synthetic biology, and AI, which usually have their own human-oriented benefits and are often assisted by our misguided instinct to control and optimize nature.

CAON responds to the trend of technology-assisted solution-making by constructing narratives of an incomputable system under extreme control. The project aims to interrogate our tendency to simplify complex ecosystems by treating nature as a system that can be fixed.

Supported by a residency at transmediale studio in Berlin and a research residency in Pakistan in collaboration with Pro Helvetia.



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**[www.weareaia.art](http://www.weareaia.art)**

 [weareaia.art](https://www.instagram.com/weareaia.art)

# OPENING HOURS

Wednesday–Friday  
12 p.m.–6 p.m.

Saturday  
11 a.m.–5 p.m.

And by appointment

Sunday–Tuesday  
Closed

FREE ENTRY

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