



FUTURE NOSTALGIA

OUTER
SPACE

Charlotte Haywood

15 July - 5 August 2023

I am not a noun. I am an ecology.

The future is not shiny. It is gritty and entangled.

Cultivating places of care, regeneration and participation.

As woven threads of coexistence coil alongside the mycorrhizal fungi midwives of orchid seed germination.

Tied in a single garment of destiny - through implicit ecology, mutualism and alchemy.

Detuning and retuning as a constant unfolding and divergence.

- Charlotte Haywood

What does it entail to live convivially with the environment? What does it mean to thrive with nature? Late capitalism elicits us as humans to consume incessantly without reciprocity, pushing the nine planetary boundaries of safe living towards the zone of uncertainty. The transgression of those boundaries are considered as high risk to the planet and to our current social organisation.¹ In addressing this threat, the prevailing narrative of our 'future doom' is a futile device in garnering the hope and resilience needed to alter the status quo which has brought us to this point of no return.

We need to reimagine.

Charlotte Haywood reimagines hybrid, communal, and inventive possibilities in 'Future Nostalgia'. This exhibition is a glimpse of our future, but it is not a future embedded in a rigid structure of humans versus others. At its heart, it's a future that centres the importance of our relationships to each other through song, dance, craft, and food: the ecologies of culture, creation and storytelling. In 'Future Nostalgia', Haywood's primary practice as a weaver is abundantly enlivened by sound, performance, multimedia installation and found material offerings. Strengthened by interdisciplinary connections, Haywood draws upon the knowledge of multiple and varied collaborators in this reimagined future, who each present lateral ways of knowing and understanding. Together, Haywood and her collaborators show the ways that collective thinking - human and non-human - is powerful and imperative in a future of growing, decaying, morphing, and transforming in relation to each other.

The artist prompts us to listen, feel, taste, see and be attentive to what's around us. Potawatomi scientist Robin Wall Kimmerer, explains that understanding nature is "something that... we have no language [for], the wordless being of others in which we are never alone."² 'Future Nostalgia' offers a reminder to understand the languages of nature, to the ways in which the planet speaks. Haywood layers these many languages together to collapse the boundaries of knowledge, merging them into new realities for the future. In 'Observation' (2022), the artist along with musicians Sue Simpson, Natalia Mann, Loni Fitzpatrick, and Kuku Yalanji Song Woman and Weaver Merindi Schreiber, de-tune human instruments to tune into the sound and vibrations of brown tea tree orchids that grow on paperbark trees on Buluwai Country/Far North Queensland. In this score too, the narration of Dr Katharina Nargar, an evolutionary biologist whose work at the Australian Tropical Herbarium is leading research on orchids and their evolutionary lineages, is in conversation with rainforest seed specialist Michelle Chapman. In 'Future Forest' (2022), a lone krump dancer from Thv Flood moves in a form that mimics the plants that symbiotically resonate to their environment in the forest. In 'Sonic Weaving' (2022) and the 'Adaptive Orchid' series (2022), Haywood transforms weaving, displaying the medium innovatively that highlights the auditory resonance and fractal tendency of nature. A significant launching point to the exhibition was interspecies residencies hosted by the Forum of Sensory Motion that was nurturing the space for ideas of communicating with non-human species.

Playing between the un/familiar, Haywood positions the exhibition as a space to find comfort amongst decay. The work 'The Future is Gritty' and 'Entangled' (2022) is a provocation in the form a chair with its cushion decaying. The comfort of the chair elicits the feeling of home, of nostalgia, of being able to relax, but is deteriorating. Despite this, hope is offered as a coconut sprouts from a rested position in the chair. In this moment, Haywood dissolves the boundaries of contentment, asking us to become familiar with degeneration and create nostalgia for this future.

Preparing this text, Haywood writes to me, "[I've] made it through a typhoon (and a missile launch)". Occurring on her recent trip to Japan, these world altering events allude to the imminence of a projected future of destruction. It's a materialisation of human created demise through exhaustless pursuit of capital, territory, and influence. The opportunity to transform our future in spite of potential annihilation through Haywood's reimagined landscape is pertinently proposed by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing:

As sites for more-than-human dramas, landscapes are radical tools for decentering human hubris. Landscapes are not backdrops for historical action: they are themselves active. Watching landscapes in formation shows humans joining other living beings in shaping worlds.³

In this decentering, we need to reimagine our human-centred social structure and actively care for our landscapes. Haywood asks us to shed the identity that thinks and therefore conquers, but rather expands and contracts like sponges to the networks of the environment. 'Future Nostalgia' boldly opens up the possibility of a future, embracing our entanglements in all its brightness, murkiness, joy and uncertainty.

- Jocelyn Flynn, 2023

¹ Stockholm Resilience Centre, "The nine planetary boundaries," 2023, <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/planetary-boundaries/the-nine-planetary-boundaries.html>.

² Robin Wall Kimmerer, "Learning the Grammar of Animacy" in *Democracy of Species* (London: Penguin Classics, 2021)

³ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 152

Charlotte Haywood lives on Bundjalung Country in Northern NSW. She is an experimental interdisciplinary artist working across the senses. She has cultivated a highly collaborative and process-driven practice that is dedicated to eco aesthetics and the nurturing of biodiversity; as the variety of life and ideas. Her performative practices and embodied materials can vary from hybrid architectural forms to the ancient technology of tapestry weaving in a symbolic un-weaving and reweaving of interrogated histories and land management practices, cultural botany, ecological restoration, gesture as language, synaesthesia, national community interdisciplinary-craft-geometry-science-environment networks, data as flavour, community cookbooks, creative disaster recovery, sonic weaving and evolving multi-narrational video works. Haywood is a master weaver. She experimentally trades between the tactile and the digital, form and phenomena- working across textiles, sculpture, installation, experimental architecture, public art, film, theatre, sound, music, flavour, linguistics, community and ecologies.

Jocelyn Flynn is an emerging writer and curator. She holds a Bachelor of Humanities (Art History) from the University of Queensland. Flynn has previously worked and volunteered for various institutional, commercial and community art organisations including the Institute of Modern Art (Brisbane); Metro Arts (Brisbane); and Milingimbi Arts and Culture (NT). She has written texts for the Ian Potter Museum of Art, Old Quad University of Melbourne; University of Queensland Society of Fine Arts; and Queensland University of Technology's Post Datum.