

## THE EVERTED CAPITAL

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### 1. The Everted Capital

Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni

Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni's epic project at Mona is in two parts. We have just wrapped up the first part, called *The Unmanned*, which comprised eight films depicting a history of computation in reverse: beginning in 2045, with 'the singularity event' (a kind of immortality brought about by technology), and ending in 1542, with the death of gods and arrival of colonial conquistadors in the land of the Ohlone people, the site of the future Silicon Valley. Those eight films are screened every afternoon in Cinemona.

And now to the far-flung future, with the second part of the project, called *The Everted Capital*. It has at its heart a gruelling, twenty-four-hour performance, set in the year 7231 and filmed at Mona. The exhibition also includes a film of nonhuman creatures that have been used as currency at times in human history; a series of blades imagined by purpose-built AI technology; and a strange landscape of sculptures that seems to grow from a large plinth running the length of the gallery and slicing through a sandstone boulder.

This peculiar scene isn't meant to be easy. It's more poetry than prose—an archaeology of our future devastation, told before it happens. In the words of the artists:

*Everyone is thinking of a world without us, thinking of what the world could be when we're gone. It's easy to imagine, in a way. But we're thinking of another narrative: what are we without the world? Just us humans without any ground to hold us.*

### 2. The Axiom

Prologue to *The Unmanned*, Season 2, 'The Everted Capital'

Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni

The menagerie of nonhuman animals that you see in this film—a beetle, a snake, an eagle and an ostrich, for instance; 30 to 40 animals in total—have all been used as currency at times in human history. The film was shot in a specially built, sphere-shaped enclosure, which was furnished with stone, clay, and types of vegetation that have previously been used (like the animals) as currency. It was filmed with a military-grade thermal imaging camera on a robotic arm at the centre of the sphere. The camera scans around the space and over the animal bodies, depicting a 'landscape of currency', as the artists put it.

The film is a prologue to *The Everted Capital*, a history of capital in reverse and the second season of Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni's epic project, *The Unmanned*.

### 3. 7231

Episode 1 of *The Unmanned*, Season 2, 'The Everted Capital'

Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni

Mona recently hosted a twenty-four-hour performance,\* which was filmed in the museum spaces with a cast of twenty-four performers. The film (which you can see projected on the

far wall of the gallery) is the first episode of *The Everted Capital*, a history of capital in reverse and the second part of Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni's epic project at Mona.

The film takes place in the year 7231 and introduces us to a community of immortals living on a 'Dyson sphere'—a mega structure that harnesses the power of the sun as it approaches extinction. More catastrophe faces these immortal beings: the return of death and capital, throwbacks to our past human evolution. As the film unfolds, a character dies every hour and the story reboots and repeats. Until, in the end, only a newborn baby remains, left to play in the empty museum for eternity. The story is inspired by 'New Australia', a failed communist utopia founded in Paraguay in the nineteenth century, and the Lydian Empire, which is said to have invented modern currency and coinage in around 700 BCE.

\*The time scheme is not literal; each 'hour' corresponds to how long it took performers to complete each iteration of the story.

#### **4. The Axiom**

Prologue to *The Unmanned*, Season 3, 'The Form of Not'  
Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni

As you walk around the massive central plinth in this gallery, be sure to take a closer look at this series of blade sculptures. There are twenty-four of them, arranged along one side of the plinth—which is itself a sort of colossal blade on its side, slicing the gallery in two.

The sculptures progress in a way that references the evolutionary history of the blade. They are based on works from the collection of Augustus Pitt Rivers, British archaeologist and founder of the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford, who believed that evolutionary logic could be applied to man-made artefacts. The sculptures were made using purpose-built AI technology that predicted the past life of blades: the AI was fed around 5000 pictures of blades from the Pitt Rivers collection and told to use this information to produce an image of a blade. The AI produced millions and millions of blades through this process, charting an imagined history of the blade (the artists describe this as the machine 'hallucinating'). Twenty-four of these blades were then selected by the artists and crafted from materials such as forged iron, wax, bone, wood and resin.

These blade sculptures serve as the prologue to *The Form of Not*, the third season of Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni's epic project, *The Unmanned*.

#### **5. Face Value**

Episode 1 of *The Unmanned*, Season 3, 'The Form of Not'  
Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni

As you explore Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni's exhibition, you'll notice a series of sculptures perforating the large plinth that runs the length the gallery. There are twenty-four sculptures in total, and each is split in two: with one component above the plinth, and the other below. It's almost as if the sculptures—crafted from rope and salt, resin and clay, fungus and strips of vinyl, plastic and sandstone—have been cut in half by the plinth, which the artists describe as a gigantic blade. The sculptures are based on mask objects from Mona's collection, alongside a statue of the Egyptian god Horus from the Louvre, which has

been moulded, turned inside out, and recast in bronze, and is being transformed here by the slow creep of salt crystals.

This strange landscape of objects seems to grow from the plinth itself. The artists see these objects as the remnants—the ‘petrified language and logic’—of the performance that was filmed in the museum as part of this exhibition. You can see the film projected on the far wall of the gallery.

These sculptures form the first episode of *The Form of Not*, the third season of Fabien Giraud and Raphaël Siboni’s epic project, *The Unmanned*.